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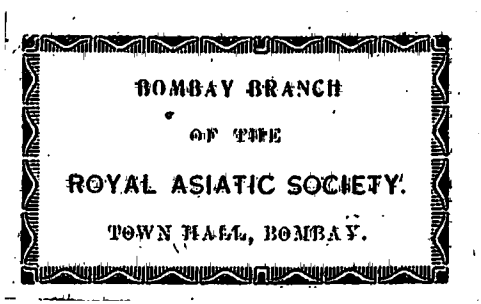

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CHRIST THE SPIRIT:

BEING AN

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PRIMITIVE VIEW OF CHRISTIANITY.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the Flesh profiteth nothing.
JOHN vi. 63.

The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.
2 COR. iii. 6.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"REMARKS ON ALCHEMY AND THE ALCHEMISTS;" AND "SWEDENBORG A HERMETIC PHILOSOPHER."

Hitchcock

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

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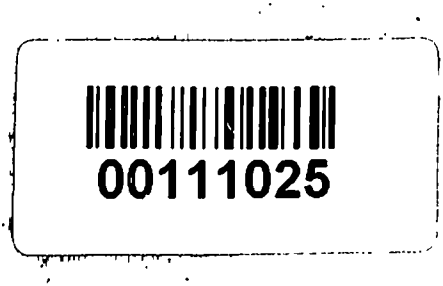
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The eye by long use comes to see even in the darkest corner; and there is no subject so obscure, but we may discern some glimpse of truth by long poring on it. Truth is the cry of all, but the game of a few. Certainly where it is the chief passion, it doth not give way to vulgar cares and views; nor is it contented with a little ardor in the early time of life, active perhaps to pursue, but not so fit to weigh and revise. He that would make a real progress in knowledge, must dedicate his age as well as youth, the later growth as well as first fruits, at the altar of Truth.

(*From a Hermetic Volume.*)

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The first edition of this work was published somewhat as an experiment. The author was profoundly convinced of the correctness of the method employed in the interpretation of the sacred volume, but he nevertheless desired to see how it might strike a few intelligent readers, and aimed to discover by their observations whether anything in the work was prominently objectionable, in order, if it should appear to be necessary or proper, to suppress the work altogether; or, if opinions should point that way, to make further illustrations or explanations, as the case might require. So far as the author has been able to observe its effect on others, competent to form an opinion, he has had abundant reason to believe that the view presented has been more than satisfactory; it has been highly approved, and he is entirely convinced that the work can do no harm, and may do some good.

There is a large and increasing class of intelligent readers and hearers of the Word, who are silent dissenters from the usual mode of presenting Christianity

in the churches. They cannot accept the common view, but have no wish, however, to separate from the Church. The author ventures to call the attention of this class to the method of study adopted and explained in the following pages. The work is not distinctly offered to church members who find no difficulties in the commonly received interpretations of Scripture. The author has no wish to intrude upon those who are perfectly satisfied, though he is of opinion that a faith which is in danger of being disturbed by a new inquiry, can hardly claim to be founded upon substantial truth, and might, perhaps, be improved by being so much disturbed as to awaken investigation. It is the Truth, as we read, that shall make us free; but no one is free who fears or can be much disturbed by inquiry. Still, the book is not distinctly offered to church members who feel that they have seated themselves upon the Rock of Ages.

Let this class, however, make no objections to an examination of the Scriptures, addressed more especially to those who find themselves drifting away from the modes of presenting the subject which had satisfied their immature years, and who, from whatever causes, have come to feel themselves, if in the church at all, yet not of it.

There are some, again, who have openly, and perhaps with some bitterness, declared themselves absolutely out of the pale of the Church, and rather court than otherwise the designation of infidels, placing, however, their own interpretation upon the word, and

understanding by it only a mark of separation from what they regard as a superstition. If any of this class should chance to fall in with this book, the author desires, with some earnestness, to ask their attention to it. The volume is small and may be soon read, and the author is greatly mistaken, or the so-called infidel will find here a view which may bring him back to the Scriptures in loving and wondering admiration of the contents of those most remarkable of all the writings in the world. The so-called infidel, under the common acceptation of the term, simply does not see the real meaning of the Bible, and despises only the shell, after all. The cure of this does not lie in proofs of the authority of the book from the assumption of a supernatural origin, but in pointing out the true meaning of the sacred volume; and this once seen, no other proof will be needed, and, in fact, other proofs will then seem to be impertinent.

Reasoning or inquiry has different stages or degrees, as illustrated in the story of the three soldiers sent in pursuit of an Irish deserter. They came to a shanty kept by an Irishman, and the most simple of the three proposed entering the house at once; for they would be sure, he thought, to find the object of their search, as he would be certain to take shelter with one of his countrymen: another, a little more shrewd, objected, saying, He will not be there, because he must know that an Irishman's house would be examined. The third, still more shrewd, turned to

the second, and said, He will reason as you do, and will therefore seek shelter in this very house, where he imagines his pursuers will not look: and there, on examination, the missing man was found, sure enough, in a dark corner of the cellar, covered over with rubbish.

The reader, if he chooses, may transform the Irish deserter into the august figure of Truth, for the purpose of running a parallel between its seekers and the pursuers of the deserter; and, now, we may consider that, possibly, the Truth may be found where the second class of thinkers are positive that it cannot be discovered.

With regard to the Scriptures, the most simple see the Truth in the literal sense; another class see nothing but absurdities and nonsense, mere rubbish, in the literal meaning, and so, perhaps proudly, reject the whole; while another class, more sober and grave—perhaps older and more experienced—are disposed to suspend their opinions for a time, until they can look around and see whether the meaning is so visibly on the surface as the first supposes, and may not lie even deeper than the second imagines.

The author has endeavored to make some acquaintance with the writings of those whom he considers of the third class of inquirers. There have been more of them in the world than is generally known, because, from various considerations, they have generally either remained silent, or have written mysterious books on what they call the philosopher's stone, the transmuta-

tion of metals, or the study of the stars; though by the first they have merely symbolized the Truth, and by the second have treated of the transformation of man from a state of nature to a state of grace, but without using cant words and expressions about it, while under the name of astrology, and various other names, the wits of former ages have inquired into what indeed they called "astral secrets"—by which they meant, however, the more unseen and wonderful properties of the spiritual nature of man. The outer world, absorbed in its business, or lost in its pleasures, was deceived; and no small number, deluded by their love of lucre, were led to abandon the profitable pursuits of industry, in hopes of finding a shorter road to this world's goods, and many others again, were foolish enough, no doubt, "to waste their wealth and reduce themselves to poverty in hopes of growing rich." Meantime the true adept prosecuted his inquiries into Truth in secret, or if he appeared in public at all, it was under cover of figures and symbols, by which means he was enabled to communicate with his "brethren," and at the same time escape the scrutinizing interference of a sanguinary and brutal inquisition, and escape also the less dangerous but hardly less vexatious fires of controversy.

It is a great relief to feel that God will take care of his own Truth, and that no man is called upon, as an indispensable duty, to worry his neighbor into a compliance with set codes and ceremonies, called creeds and church formularies, or burn him at the stake if he

chooses to seek GOD'S blessing by some other method. The way is clear now for the most open and candid inquiries to be both made and published; and, simply because it is so, we may see asperities wearing away on all sides; and the best results may be anticipated, since the parties in pursuit of Truth are not violently driven into artificial opposition where "the contest degenerates into one for victory and not for Truth." In reaching a secure haven, however, there may possibly be some need of passing through an open sea subject to storms, upon the "uses" of which, as well as those of "adversity," the writer will say nothing, as experienced navigators have no need of being reminded of them.

It has been no part of the design of the author to speak of the origin of the Old Testament writings. Their existence two thousand years ago, and that they were regarded as divine by the Jews, are facts questioned by no one. It seems to be well determined, however, in the minds of critical scholars that, originally, there were two "documents," which appear with considerable distinctness in the Pentateuch, and in some of the later writings. Of course the Law, so called, was in existence prior to the appearance of the prophecies and other portions of what is now called the Old Testament. For the view taken by the author, it is not important to determine the order or the times in which various portions of Scripture were added to the Law. The New Testament assumes the existence of the Old, without going into investigations about its

origin or history, and the purpose of the writer is to show the relation of the New to the Old, and in what sense it is an explanation or interpretation of the Old, while yet itself needs interpretation.

For this purpose, the writers of the gospels are supposed to have belonged to a peculiar sect or society among the Jews, who had an opinion pointing to a secret meaning, or spiritual sense, as being contained in the letter of the Old Testament. This was what, in their conventional language, they called the *children's bread* (Matt. xv. 26), regarding it as too sacred for the profane. This secret doctrine was not to be thrown to the "dogs," as the profane were called. The truths they saw in the Scriptures under the letter, they also called *pearls*, which, as something "holy," was not to be cast before "swine" (Matt. vii. 6). The letter of the Scripture they likened to water, but its internal sense was likened to wine, or was called the Spirit.

For the purpose of furnishing an illustration of the manner of using these symbols, I will expand here a portion of the text in Section XI. of the following work, though some may think it out of place in a preface. It may serve to exhibit the method upon which this work has been written.

In the interpretation of the New Testament, the first point to be considered is, that although persons are put forward as speakers and as actors, we must understand that principles and things are represented; and these, also, only as they stood in the minds of the (Essene) writers of the gospels—the opinion of Euse-

bius being adopted, as explained at the close of Section VI., that the gospels were the secret books of the Essene brotherhood, written by members of the society for the purpose of teaching and illustrating the older Sacred books after a mystical and symbolic method—this style of writing being adopted to conceal their opinions from the profane or ignorant, who were supposed to be incapable of appreciating the doctrines. In the gospels, Jesus Christ represents the Sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews, which were likened to a living creature, having a body and a soul. He personates the Law, written and unwritten; but, in the latter case, he represents the Spirit of the Scriptures, the Spirit of Truth, as he is represented as calling himself in John xvi. 7, 13. In this case, where he represents the Spirit, and the Baptist appears, the latter stands for the Scriptures also; but as the written Scriptures only, the letter, of which Christ is the Spirit. The Scriptures must be seen as double—as written: and, as the Spirit in which they were written.

The Letter is symbolized by water, and thus John the Baptist is said to baptize with water. This, I say, indicates his representative character, and that he represents the written Scriptures, symbolized by water.

If, now, we observe how the Baptist is introduced by all four of the evangelists, we shall see him as the precursor or forerunner of Christ, or as the Messenger commissioned to call men to repentance. This is the office of the written Scriptures, GOD'S message or messenger to man. The Sacred Writings must be consid-

ered the forerunner of that Spirit (of Truth) which they were designed to originate, or bring into living action, in those to whom they were sent. But when that Spirit comes to any one, it is as much before the written, in power, as *fire* is to *water*. Therefore, the Baptist, who baptizes in water, the symbol of the letter, refers to the Spirit as coming after him, and as baptizing with the Holy Ghost (that is, with the Spirit) and with *fire* (Matt. iii. 11).

Here we may see the elements of the explanation of the declaration to Nicodemus, and other similar expressions in the gospels, setting forth the necessity of being born of water and the Spirit, of eating of the flesh of the Son of Man (the Scriptures being the Son of Man), and of drinking of his blood; which simply means, that in order to receive the benefit of the Scriptures, they must be understood in both their Letter and their Spirit—as explained in the third Section of the following work.

Let us now look at the first chapter of John, and see how all of this is mystically represented, the writer being compelled, by his oath of secresy, to adopt a mystic style of writing, to avoid betraying the secrets of the fraternity to "dogs" and "swine."

The Scriptures are personified, and set forward as speaking. In the first chapter of John, the Baptist, the Letter of the Scriptures, is supposed to speak, and he announces his office or character in the declaration: I baptize with water, but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not, verse 26. This unknown one is

the invisible Spirit *among* us all; invisible and unknown to most of us. He it is, says the Baptist, who, coming after me, that is, after the Letter, is preferred before the Letter, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose (verse 27).

In John iii. 30 a similar relation of the Letter to the Spirit is indicated in the language: He must increase, but I must decrease; for, as the Spirit grows in any one, the importance of the Letter declines; and this decrease in the spiritual importance of the Letter proceeds so far in the end that, as in the case of St. Paul, CHRIST in the flesh, which is the Letter again, is known, that is, is *needed* no longer, 2 Cor. v. 16.

The Baptist, the Letter, as we read, speaks of the Spirit as coming after him, and yet, as being preferred before him; and he gives as the reason for this superiority—that he was before him, verse 15. In the same sense, CHRIST himself says, in another chapter, that he was before Abraham. The meaning of this is, that the Spirit is eternal, and thus preceded the Letter (the Baptist), and yet, to the natural or phenomenal man, the Spirit comes after the Letter. It is simply thus: Every child is born to the Letter, already written, as the Jews saw it; and as we now see it, with the New Testament added, as so much water, to that of the Old Testament: for the written New Testament is not the fire, but the water, so long as its life is seen in the Letter only—as this is declared in John i. 8, where the *fire* is called the *light* to which the Letter comes as a testimony, but is not the light itself. But when the

child, born to the Letter, discovers the sense, the Spirit of the Letter, the Spirit is said to come after the Letter, though, spiritually, it was before the Letter.

The mystical appearance of these sayings lies in the manner of speaking of the Spirit, which is essentially eternal, but apparently or phenomenally comes to each one of us in time; and it so appears, because we are phenomenally born in time ourselves; though, essentially, we are immortal also; and we discover our immortality through the Spirit of Truth, which is seen to be eternal. Hence, CHRIST, THE SPIRIT, is said to bring immortality to light, through the gospel, which means the Truth—not simply by an oral declaration, for the ancient philosphers declared this as emphatically as the New Testament writers, but, by an inward sense of the Truth, which is personified and represented as speaking in CHRIST.

The mode of presenting the relation of the Baptist to CHRIST in Matthew differs from the method adopted by John, the writers not being bound by historical facts, but each using the latitude of a mythical historian, though they wrote from a common idea, no doubt well understood among the "brethren." This common idea, and the constant communication of the writers with each other, is the true source of what is called the harmony of the gospels, which are not based upon common historical facts, known alike to the several writers, but upon a common idea, or mode of interpreting the older Scriptures by symbolic or mythical histories.

In John's gospel, it is the Baptist, as we see, who speaks; but in Matthew, CHRIST is the speaker for teaching the same doctrine; that of showing the relative superiority of the Spirit over the Letter.

In Matthew, CHRIST says, speaking of the Baptist, that is, of the Letter, that no one born of woman is greater than he (Matt. xi. 11). The Letter is said to be born of woman, because it arises on the nature side of life, and this is symbolized by the feminine character, the Spirit being considered masculine. The Spirit is said to be from above, or born of GOD (John i. 13). The Letter is dead, but the Spirit is life. And then it is added, after speaking of the greatness of the Baptist, meaning the Letter of the Jewish Scriptures, that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he; same verse. That is, whoever obeys the written Scriptures has a certain amount of excellence secured to him; but to obey the Letter, the Spirit being "unknown," is to obey another, and not the immediate law of one's own nature; and this, even though for our temporal good, involves a certain restraint upon the soul. In such a case spiritual freedom is not attained, that freedom of the Spirit which St. Paul preached, and which freed him from what he called the bondage of the Letter. The Spirit is represented in CHRIST; and to attain to, or possess the Spirit, is heaven, in the sense of the gospel writers, because "the Spirit is free;" meaning, that when the Spirit of the Letter is received and lived, the requirements of the Letter are obeyed from the Spirit alone, and not

under a sense of obligation imposed from without. Therefore CHRIST says, The least in the kingdom of heaven, that is, the least portion of the Spirit of Truth, is more blessed, or gives a higher blessing, in the performance of the duties it requires, than when the same duties are performed under a sense of obligation from without: and this is so, because the Spirit is the real life of man, and what that requires is done from love, in obedience to one's own highest nature. This is a labor of love, and a labor of love is a labor of joy.

All of this is in harmony with the older Scriptures, where we see that Moses, as the written or external Law, does not reach the Land of Promise; that is, the Letter, of itself, does not carry any one to heaven, but only gives a "Pisgah view" of the Holy Land. Moses does not reach heaven; for the Land of Promise, flowing with milk and honey, is heaven in the Mosaic allegory. Here, as I reiterate, we must see the meaning of all those declarations, that we must be born of water and the Spirit; must eat of the flesh and drink of the blood of the Son of Man, that is, of the Scriptures, or there is no life in us; and this is declared, as the reader will see in its proper place, by Origen, himself probably an Essene, sworn to secrecy with the rest of the brethren.

I will just mention here, since I have omitted to notice it in the following pages, that the story of the beheading of the Baptist admits of an easy mythical interpretation; thus: the Baptist, as the written Law, is represented as condemning sin in Herod, who repre-

sents the natural man in the allegory, as Pharaoh does in the older allegory. The natural man, rebuked by the Scriptures, thereupon repudiates, or denies (that is, beheads) the Scriptures; and how many at this day reject the Scriptures because the Scriptures reject them!

I make these remarks upon the Baptist and his office, in further explanation of what is said of him in the eleventh Section of the following work, where the reference to the "forerunner" of the Spirit may be thought to need further exposition, and I request the reader to reserve his judgment upon it until he shall have read as far as that Section.

We should read the Scriptures, not with the idea of a historic past—not as giving us a picture of a past truth—but in the faith of there being a universal truth now invisibly "among" us; although, as John expresses it, it is a truth that many of us "know not." We should see the written Scriptures, represented in John, with his water or Letter-baptism, as explained in the eleventh Section just referred to; and see CHRIST as the invisible Spirit of the Scriptures now in our "midst;" but he should be seen, as the disciples going to Emmaus saw him, as explained in the thirteenth Section. Then our understanding may be opened, as expressed in Luke xxiv. 45, and we may understand the Scriptures after the manner of St. Paul, who tells us expressly that spiritual truths must be spiritually discerned.

In this edition, the author has made no change

whatever in his mode of treating his subject, but has re-arranged some of the sections, making some transpositions in order to bring under one view portions of the inquiry naturally belonging together, and he has introduced occasional explanatory remarks, to elucidate more clearly what in the first edition may have seemed too briefly handled. He is perfectly aware of the magnitude of the field he has entered upon, and is very willing to acknowledge how little he has accomplished; and he does this the more readily as he wishes to invite other explorers to carry on this mode of inquiry to further and higher results. If the author has indicated a right method of study, still the result in any one case must depend in a great degree upon individual effort, and a faithful application of the proposed method. The motto is from Scripture:—The Spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; and when the student discovers the true sense, or the *Spirit*, of this single passage, he will find himself on the way to other and more valuable discoveries.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE writer of the following pages has not ventured upon holy ground without having reverentially, as he trusts, put off his shoes and uncovered his head.

It is said that whosoever has a truth, owes it to humanity to "cast it on the waters;" and, if this is so, then, those who even think they have a truth may venture to suggest it for the consideration of others. This last is the position of the writer. He thinks he has a glimpse, and something more than a glimpse, of a truth in connection with the sacred volume, and desires to give some circulation to it; but he does so in no spirit of arrogance. He would especially invite attention to it from those who may have found it difficult to understand the miracles recorded in both the Old and the New Testaments.

In endeavoring to look into the Scriptures with a rational eye, it will appear to many, no doubt, as it ever has so appeared, that the sacred volume is degraded and brought down, as the phrase is, to the level of human reason. Certainly, it is a solemn truth that

we cannot think too exaltedly or with too much awe of God. But we are as certainly in danger of lowering our idea of the Supreme Being by attributing to his agency, in a supernatural sense, a work existing in such a form as manifestly subjects it to the accidents of time, and which must pass through the hands of various uninspired translators, before it can possibly reach the eyes of men in different countries and ages of the world. Let us be careful, I would say, lest, by exalting the Scriptures over-much, we degrade our conceptions of God; for there may be an error on this side as well as on the other. In proportion as we admit into the mind erroneous opinions, of what sort soever they may be, we must obscure and falsify, to that extent, the idea of God itself; and, in so far as we do this, it is certain that we must lose our hold upon the corner-stone of all true philosophy and of all true religion. God must be the author and finisher of our faith, if we are to have a true faith.

We had better confess at once that no mere writing can be divine, except in a qualified sense; but in such a sense I am as ready as any one to regard the Scriptures as divine. They were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by a holy spirit of truth. But when I am told to look upon them as absolutely supernatural, I am repelled from them, and am in danger of losing the benefits I might otherwise derive from them. Upon this consideration I have determined to offer my brethren in the "body," which is "the temple of the Holy Ghost," (1 Cor. vi. 19,) certain views

which have served myself as a key by which, as I believe, a well-disposed student may be able to enter satisfactorily into at least the vestibule, or outer courts, of the most wonderful volume in the world, and the most difficult to understand.

I would ask, with as much earnestness as may not compromise a reasonable degree of diffidence, that the suggestions in the following pages may receive the attention of those who feel that they do not well know what to make of the miraculous portions of the Scriptures; not, indeed, as a final solution of the multitude of problems that may arise on a perusal of the sacred volume, but as furnishing some clue to a method of study by which, with patience and the Divine blessing, some valuable results may be obtained.

If a neighbor of mine speaks to me, I understand him, if I understand him at all, by means of some principles in common between us. We stand together in the same nature, and are involved together in the same universal principles, however diversified in their operations; and we have a common life between us. If I am written to from a distance, I understand the writing, if I understand it at all, upon similar principles. If a writing comes to me, not merely from a geographical distance, but from a more or less remote antiquity, still, if I am to understand the writing, it must be upon similar principles. In proportion as the distance increases in time and space through which a writing comes to me, it may be necessary to take into consid-

eration a greater variety of circumstances, in searching for the sense of the writer; but still, if I am to understand the writing at all, I repeat, that it must be upon some principles common to the writer and myself. I may have to read the writing in a translation, and must then make allowances for this, and I must have regard to the peculiarities of the position of the writer, his connection with others, the state of society in which he wrote, &c., &c.; but after making all these admissions, I still feel that I can make no progress at all in understanding the writing, if I assume so great a difference between the writer and myself as makes us of *diverse* natures.

Now, I believe with St. Paul, that "all nations of men are of one blood," that is, of one nature; and I am persuaded that there is something in every man which is common to the whole human race, admitting, nevertheless, of endless diversities as to particulars. All men "are nearer to each other by nature, than they can be separated from each other by circumstances;" we are one by nature, and are divided by accident only.

Upon these principles I endeavor to understand Homer. He wrote under limitations which limit all mankind. He had no power to pass out of the order of Providence, whose laws extend equally, however variedly, to the whole human race. Upon this assumption, if it be one, I look into Homer, and immediately deny an actual reality to the great epic of the Greek poet. There may have been a Troy which the Greeks

destroyed, but there was no such Troy as Homer describes, with its atmosphere filled with gods, counselling and fighting as we read.

How, then, are we to understand Homer? Certainly the Homeric gods are not persons, but personifications; and why may not courage be personified, and its achievements signalized under the name of Mars, the god of war? And, for poetic purposes, why may not the earth be called Ceres, and the sea Neptune? For, to a poetic genius, nature lives: she is not dead.

For many ages the most civilized portion of the world regarded the poems of Homer as divine, a sublime tribute to his superlative genius; but no one now sees any thing especially divine in Homer: yet, after denying a historical reality to the Iliad, scholars discover, as they tell us, imperishable beauties in the great epic.

It is an instructive fact that the most enduring beauties of Homer do not in the least depend upon there having been such a place as Troy; and who can deny but that a great and important sense may be discovered in other works, coming from a remote antiquity, and enclosing marvellous and seemingly impossible narrations, by admitting that the mere writing need not be taken literally.

Now, I would endeavor to understand Moses precisely as I would understand, or would try to understand, Homer, making all proper and necessary distinc-

tions of race, condition and subject, being careful always never to overstep the modesty of nature.

In the following work it has not been the aim of the author to present anything new, but rather to revive something very old. He is very much of the opinion of the Preacher, that there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, Behold this is new? It hath been already of old time which was before us.

On the point of originality, therefore, the author concedes everything, and grants that he has freely used whatever has fallen in his way that promised to answer his purpose, feeling responsible only for this purpose; and, for the most part, he has used his materials without referring to authorities, except when necessary to sustain a statement depending upon authority; for, indeed, and upon his subject especially, it might be very difficult to credit a single thought to its right parentage. An opinion expressed to-day in England, may be claimed for some German within a hundred years past, and then, reasserted for an Englishman a hundred years still earlier. Few are aware of the extent of this who have not taken some pains to examine the matter. Within the last few years, much has been said of German philosophy; and the Germans have the credit with many of having discovered and set forth a distinction between subject and object, subjective and objective knowledge, reason and understanding, as if nothing of this kind had ever been thought of before. Yet, in

1682, Jos. Glanville published a small work of only thirty pages—English good sense putting much in a small compass—entitled a DISCOURSE OF TRUTH, written by the Rev. Dr. Rust, who never saw it himself in print. In the first section of this work the proposition to be discussed is stated in these words, *Truth is two-fold; in the* OBJECT *and in the* SUBJECT; and, besides the first section, much of the whole work is devoted to the proof of this distinction.

The Rev. Dr. Rust affirms the unchangeable order of Providence, under a somewhat antiquated expression—*the mutual respects and relations of things*; and the subject of section viii. is to show "that the denial of the mutual respects and relations of things unto one another to be eternal and unchangeable, despoils GOD of the universal RECTITUDE of his NATURE."

An Essay much like this discourse was subsequently published by John Norris, the so-called Platonist; and if any one will enter the field of that species of writing in England in the middle of the seventeenth century, he may be led to think that modern refinements in philosophical speculation have done little else than expand and elaborate principles whose germ may be found there.

The doctrine of *Order*, or Law, in the course of history, has been more or less consciously present in the mind of every philosophical historian from a very early period. Its presence is easily seen in the writings of Thucydides, of Tacitus, and of Polybius, as also in the writings of Strabo the geographer, and in other

ancient authors of high repute. Its presence was distinctly recognized by Vico, who, in announcing it as a principle, in the seventeenth century, claimed to have inaugurated a NEW SCIENCE. Under the influence of this science Niebuhr wrote his Lectures upon the History of Rome, pointing out the fabulous character of many an ancient legend, which had until then been usually received as an integral portion of the history of the ancient mistress of the world. These Lectures were universally received with admiration in the learned world, and, at first, met with toleration, if not approbation, everywhere. But when it was seen that Eichhorn, and others, carried the same principle into their studies upon the Mosaic records, where it made sad havoc with many a literal reading, it excited at once a most violent opposition; and the principle employed by Niebuhr was then pronounced either false or inapplicable for the interpretation of any part of the sacred writings.

The effect, on the whole, has been to divide modern students into two classes, as usual. One class adheres to the principle and accepts all of its consequences. The other turns away from it: and the latter throw themselves upon some—I know not what—other principle, and refuse to listen to any attempts to carry a "carnal" reason into the exposition of the Scriptures —which are to be reverenced, but are closed against all attempts to understand them from any merely rational point of view. But it is of the very nature of reason to protest against this extreme result. No

reasonable man can be made to believe that Romulus and Remus were suckled by a wolf, or that Balaam's ass ever made use of human speech. A preposterous affectation of taste has complained of the critical labors of learned scholars, as if they had deprived ancient fables of their beauty by explaining their true meaning. But this is to value the shell before the kernel, and to despise the jewel in behalf of the case enclosing it. Something of this sort of taste may perhaps be excusable in favor of some few innocent nursery tales of Mother Goose, which exercise no tyrannical dominion over life, but it is out of place when it seeks to protect ignorance and superstition in high places exercising a controlling influence over the world.

The doctrine of an unchangeable order of Providence is as old as philosophy. It is remarkably stated by Plutarch, in his Essay on the inscription, "*E. I.*" at Delphos, in the course of which Homer is curiously cited as authority for the doctrine:

"The art of prophesying (says Plutarch) is a divination concerning the future, from things that are present and past. For neither is the original of any thing without a cause, nor the foreknowledge of any thing without a reason. But since all things, that are done, follow and are connected with those that have been done; and those that shall be done, with these that are done, according to the progress, proceeding from the Beginning to the End: he who knows how to look into the causes of this together, and naturally to

connect them one with another, knows also and divines

"'What things now are, shall be, or e'er have been.'

And, indeed, Homer excellently well places first, things that are present; and afterwards, those that are future and past. For the argument, according to the virtue of the connection, is taken from the present: Thus, *If this is, that preceded;* and again, *If this is, that shall be.* For the knowledge of the consequence is, as has been said, a rational thing; but sense gives the anticipation to reason; whence (though it may seem bold to say it) I will not be afraid to make this assertion: That the tripos (or oracle) of Truth is Reason."

In these two things referred to by Plutarch, Reason and Sense, we must observe that the first furnishes the law of prediction, whilst the last provides the occasion for its exercise.

Now, the union of these in the soul is said to be a mystical marriage, the possession of which is security for a certain tranquillity, which lives in a freedom enjoyed under a recognized law. On the one side, Nature is seen as a blind force; on the other, as a life, perfectly free. That there is a combination of these views, resulting in a beautiful harmony, is the assertion of many so-called mystical philosophers, who seem to speak earnestly of it; while they tell us, at the same time, that their view is incommunicable through the senses. This, in religion, I take to be a species of inspiration which has been felt in all ages. To the

sensuous faculties there seem to be diversities of it; because, in referring to it, men have used different sensuous representations of it; but, in fact, it is common ground for true poetry, true philosophy, and true religion. The philosopher alone may sometimes attempt to explain this unity, but he does little else than use words vainly. He talks of it, perhaps, as the immutable; upon which others infer a fatality, which he does not mean at all. He may speak of infinite freedom, when the inference is made that there is no law, because the freedom is not seen in the law. He may call it the *absolute*, and waste words about it; or he may fall in love with the word *unconditioned*, and imagine it expresses the very thing. But after exhausting words in endeavoring to enunciate the unspeakable—the pious Soul calls it GOD, and forbids all attempts to represent it by images (Ex. xx. 4)—in some degree violating his own rule by writing about it; but, to escape this contradiction as far as possible, he writes of a *Tabernacle*, or of a *Temple*, made without "the noise of hammer, or ax, or any tool of iron;" and it is left to the pious intuitions of others to interpret the meaning; and it is left, also, to the same intuitions to determine what is meant by entering the Tabernacle *unveiled* to commune with God. Through some similar means the pious Soul must discover what sort of [moral] spices, or [spiritual] frankincense, &c., Moses was directed to lay up, in the place [?] where "GOD was to meet him," (Ex. xxx. 36.)

We are curiously instructed by the same pious Mo-

ses that, by the outward sense we can see external nature only, and what this is, (Ex. xxxiii. 23;) and we are told that no man shall see GOD'S face and live. Hence John, referring to this, says beautifully, that the only-begotten Son hath *declared* him; though he might have put it in the present tense, if he had pleased.

Here is matter for profound study. Let no man despise it, as he values a peaceful view over nature.

Before closing this preface, already too long, I fear, I must say a few words of infidelity, which is thought to be rife in our age; for it is important that words should be used in a clear and definite sense. Infidelity is a word that expresses something in antithesis to *fidelity;* and by FIDELITY I understand faithfulness, or truthfulness. A faithful man is a true man, or a man of truth. Two men may be equally faithful, and yet have very different beliefs about a multitude of questions; especially historical questions, in relation to which testimony does not admit of the certainty of science. Modern toleration allows great diversities of belief in regard to the Scriptures, without subjecting the followers of different systems of Bible interpretations to the charge of infidelity, or unfaithfulness; but very few are willing to go a step further, and admit that a true faith is faith in fidelity itself; and in this direction, to admit, also, that this may exist independently of all known forms of faith, for it preceded them. Under this definition, a Mahomedan, a Boodhist, a Brahmin, may each be faithful; and a reasonable char-

ity might concede to them a fair share of excellence, particularly if we deny to them a superior light, which may guide others with the less danger of falling.

The only real infidel, therefore, is one who disowns, or denies the virtue of fidelity, and the obligation to be faithful.

It has been long seen that what has been called the infidelity of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was, in fact, a species of Protestantism, directed against the narrowness of the Church—not a direct hostility to Christianity. It is remarkable that Collins, Toland, Chubb, and others, claimed to be Christians; and Tindall used, as the title of his book, an express declaration of Bishop Sherlock, which occurs in the following passage from one of his sermons:

"The religion of the gospel (says the Bishop, certainly very respectable authority) is the true original religion of Reason and Nature. The doctrine of Repentance, with which the gospel set out in the world, had reference to the *Law of Reason* and *Nature*, against which man had everywhere offended. And since Repentance infers the necessity of a future reformation, and a return to that duty and obedience from which, by transgression, we are fallen, the consequence is manifestly this: that the *Gospel was a Republication of the Law of Nature*, and its *precepts declarative* of that *Original Religion*, which was as *old as the Creation*."

To understand even the writings of Voltaire on this subject, we must substitute for the word RELIGION in

his works, whenever this is assailed, that of *Superstition*, and perceive it in the intolerable corruptions of the church, as Voltaire witnessed them, and as they may now be seen in some Catholic countries. We should recollect that Luther was branded as an infidel in his time, and the Catholic Church still regards him as the arch-heretic of his day, a fit companion for the cloven-footed gentleman himself.

The *odium theologicum* has become, it is said, a well-understood expression, and though it has been very terrible in its day, it has been considerably shorn of its power, since it is known to have its root in a sensuous view of religion, and with great exactness marks a pharisee and a bigot. Lovers of truth do not hate those who err, but are moved with "compassion" for them; Matt. ix. 36. The truth is, that the existence of this *odium*, whether it be of theologians or of philosophers—for philosophers can hate as well as theologians—manifests a partial view of one and the same subject, a right apprehension of which must bring philosophers and religionists amicably together; for the God of religion and the God of philosophy must as surely be one and the same, as that the God of the Jews is the God of the Gentiles also, as asserted by St. Paul, Rom. iii. 29.

There may be those who fail to see the beauties and the perfections of the gospel, from defective moral perceptions, very much as some men have no ear for music, and cannot distinguish an exquisite harmony from a bacchanalian song. There may, also, be a sense

in which the natural man knoweth not the things of God; but those who are most forward to appeal to this doctrine never seem to imagine that they may be the subjects of it; while it is undeniable that a large portion of what is called infidelity in the present age is entirely owing to the presence in the gospels of certain relations, delivered as historical facts, which offend the intellect and not the will.

Now, the intellect is a law both to itself and to the will; that is, a truth seen in the intellect is absolute for itself, and the will has no control over it, as may be seen by this simple example, often used to illustrate this principle—that, the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. This, when seen at all, is seen absolutely, and the will has no power over the perception; and it is the same for all scientific truth. How far the intellect may proceed in unfolding or discovering this sort of truth must be an indeterminate question, except for itself; but so far as it sees, it sees absolutely, and no will, good or bad, holy or carnal, has anything to do with it. Hence, if any one recognizes intellectually a permanent order in the course of Providence, the presence, in a seeming history, of that which interrupts or disturbs that order, imposes thereby an obligation upon the will itself to seek some other than a historical sense; and this is the case with some minds in this scientific age, with regard to the miracles inserted in the gospels as histories. Those relations seem to interrupt the order of Providence, and they strike at the foundation of science, which is built upon

an assumption of the permanence of that order. Listen to the most prevalent objections to the gospel, and in almost every case they will be seen to be leveled against what are called miracles.

These objections have made themselves felt so deeply in our time, that many intelligent clergymen have been constrained to assert the principle of an inviolable order of nature; and then assume that GOD provided for a particular miraculous history at a foreordaining period of the world; which, therefore, as they assert, entered into the originally designed order of Providence, and did not contravene it. But this statement affirms, in substance, what it denies in words. It denies miracles in words, and yet provides for them by an assumption in the will of GOD, which, by this assumption, is poisoned with the very uncertainty which the theory seeks to drive out of nature. It is no relief from the pain of supposing a disorder in nature, to transfer the *idea* of it to GOD.

Some have sought to explain the miracles upon purely natural principles; but nothing can be more hopeless than such a task, at which Paulus is said to have labored so ineffectually.

The early fathers of the church—or some of them—had another method of interpreting the miracles, and the author has desired to give prominence to it in the following pages; and this, with some few other points, which will be seen in the progress of the work, it is hoped may offer some rational views of these "disturbers of the peace of religion," and yet leave their

teachings not only unimpaired, but greatly strengthened, by the intimation of a true and sure principle for their interpretation; but, again, I say this is not offered as anything new, but as something believed to be true.

The author would respectfully ask of those who may attempt to read the following work, that they will see it and judge of it as a whole, and not, by a partial reading—the eye upon a fragment only—place themselves in an unfit position to determine the true aim of the writer, who is not "ashamed" to set up what seems to him a defense of Christianity, in this so-called infidel age—a Christianity which, in the language of Bishop Sherlock, is as old as the Creation.

CHRIST THE SPIRIT.

SECTION I.

The author of the following work has been during many years, and over no small portion of geographical space, a careful observer of the unrest which pervades a large number of those who, by education or favorable opportunities, might be supposed capable of forming just opinions upon the historical and other questions connected with the origin of Christianity; and as he is convinced that no small portion of this uneasiness proceeds, not from the will but from the intellect in man, he has concluded to write out a statement of the result of his studies on this subject,—in order to set forth the principle, that the Truth of the Gospel may be apprehended and received, independently of the miraculous portion of the history through which, or in connection with which, it has come to our time.

I commence by premising, that—

To understand anything, in any sense admitting of explanation, means, that we find a place for the thing

in what we know of the order of events in nature; not that we can explain or understand nature itself, otherwise than as we refer it to GOD. I mean to say that, by considering nature itself, it cannot be explained, neither can anything in nature be explained, or understood, which means the same thing, but by finding a place for it in what we suppose we know of the order of events in nature. I will illustrate what I mean by this simple case:—we see an object floating down with the current of a river, and we explain the motion of the object, by the current of the river, which we assume to know. But when we attempt to explain the current of the river, we resort to a theory of gravitation which finally carries us into the field of unexplained nature. And this is always the limit of all explanations of this kind; so that it becomes a maxim that, in an absolute sense, we do not know the cause of anything in the universe—except, as I say, by referring everything to GOD.

I think it well to premise this much, in order to destroy all grounds for what might take the form of arrogance and presumption, if a place can be found for the written gospels in what may be considered the order of nature. An impenetrable mystery overhangs all things in nature, especially when approached by what the Germans call the understanding, "judging according to sense;" and this mystery will not be removed, even in case it may appear that the gospels can be understood, in the sense above indicated.

I consider this a very important point; for I look

upon it as a fatal misstep, in any one, to imagine that such a knowledge of the gospels, or of anything else in nature, can ever be reached, as shall take them from under the veil of mystery which lies, under GOD, over all things. My examination, therefore, will proceed entirely within the limits here indicated; and if a place can be found for the gospels within the order of nature, we may hope, through the consideration here suggested, to be preserved from a dangerous spiritual pride. A profound, yet beautiful mystery, will always remain, limiting all human efforts to understand nature; the reason for which is very simple, and is no other than this: that Nature, without any play upon words, is truly and absolutely the nature of GOD. When we say that nature does this or that, we can only mean to say that GOD does this or that, unless we intend to affirm a life-power in nature independently of GOD. But as two words are used, it may perhaps assist us to clearer conceptions of their meaning to define them, as I have elsewhere defined them, by saying that God is the essence of nature, while nature is the existence of God. Then we may understand the declaration of St. Paul, that the invisible things of GOD are known by the visible; or, as some have said, nature is the revelation of GOD: but, still, we must hold that, as God is inseparable from his decrees, so he is inseparable from his works, and therefore again we say that nature is, for us, the nature of God.

There were three principal sects among the Jews.

Neander speaks of seven, but he includes notices of obscure and extinct opinions, and we need not go beyond the statements of the two Jews, Philo and Josephus, where we find a specific account of three only. These three sects were, the *Sadducees*, the *Pharisees*, and the *Essenes*. The two first are frequently mentioned in the New Testament—the third never; but, instead of it, we meet with a multitude of references to a class of friends called "the brethren."

Now, the ESSENES were a brotherhood; and I propose to show reasonable grounds for a belief that the New Testament writers were ESSENES—except St. Paul, for reasons which will appear hereafter.

In the first place, it would be absurd to suppose that the profoundly spiritual writings of the New Testament could have proceeded from the Scribes, Sadducees or Pharisees, if any dependence can be placed upon the representations of their character in the 23d chapter of Matthew, and in other places, wherever they are mentioned in the gospels. They were "hypocrites," "serpents," a "generation of vipers." *

The Scribes were not a sect; but, as their name imports, they were a class of writers, to be found in all countries where education is not common. The author has seen them in the city of Mexico, and elsewhere, seated in public places, inditing epistles, &c., at the dictation of those who could not write themselves.

* These expressions should be noticed, as here used, in order that we may be prepared to understand similar expressions when we find them elsewhere used in Scripture, as in the last chapter of Mark, and in other places.

The Sadducees are thought, by some, to have been more able than the Pharisees; but they doubted the immortality of the soul, and cared little for the Scriptures, except for the books of the Law, that is, for the Pentateuch. The Pharisees were rigid formalists, strict followers of the ceremonial law, narrow-minded and superstitious—praying in public places, "that they might be seen of men."

These sects, therefore, could not have given birth to the gospel writers.

But in the character of the ESSENES a different class of men may be seen, for an account of whom we must consult Philo and Josephus, the former of whom was born about twenty years before, and the latter about thirty-seven years after the Christian era, according to received accounts.

Philo lived principally at Alexandria, and wrote chiefly on philosophy; or, rather, he labored to turn the Jewish Scriptures into philosophy, by interpretation. The Hebrew Scriptures were to him sacred or divine allegories, inclosing a natural or philosophic sense, which, by interpretation he sought to bring to light, his philosophic creed being that of many learned Alexandrians of his time, derived principally from Plato. Josephus lived chiefly at Jerusalem, and wrote a history of the Jewish wars, and a history of Jewish antiquities, eking out Scripture accounts by other authorities and by traditions.

The writings of the two men show that Philo was a

thoughtful, well-disposed, considerate man; while Josephus was credulous, vain and ambitious, and evidently thought himself the greatest Jew of his day.

Philo is said to have lived to a great age, and, of course, to a period when he might have known the facts reported of JESUS, if they were historical; and his disposition to discover and interpret remarkable relations, in connection with the Jewish religion, would naturally have led him to comment upon the miracles of JESUS, if he had ever heard of them; but he makes no reference to him, nor to the astonishing events of his life and death.

Josephus wrote a very minute account of the events at Jerusalem and the country round about, embracing the period when the miraculous history is said to have occurred; yet he, likewise, makes no allusion to JESUS, or to any one immediately connected with him, or with his mission, except, perhaps, an allusion to the shipwreck of St. Paul. The mention of this shipwreck, however, considered together with his silence in regard to the miracles as reported in the Acts, amongst which he must have lived, proves that he either never heard of those wonders, or gave no credit to them.

A forgery, fastened by scholars upon the age of Eusebius, if not upon Eusebius himself, attempted to insert some twenty or thirty lines in the writings of Josephus, referring to CHRIST; but they have been universally rejected as spurious, so that Josephus bears no testimony of there having been such a person.

The principal reasons for rejecting the passage in

Josephus referring to CHRIST are, first, its brevity and apparent want of connection with that which precedes and that which follows it; and, secondly, the fact, that in the controversies carried on in regard to the personality of CHRIST prior to the fourth century, no allusion to this passage has been discovered, as having been made by any controversialist; an omission altogether inexplicable if the passage was in existence.

It is impossible for any rational inquirer to observe this negative testimony against the reality of the history of JESUS, and not be struck with it. This, in connection with the absence of all allusion to so extraordinary a person by the contemporary Greek and Roman historians, makes it almost certain that there could have been no such miraculously endowed person. We look in vain for any contemporary notice of the gospels, or of their authors, or even of the subject of the gospels, CHRIST himself,—I mean outside of the New Testament itself. "The most remarkable man the world ever saw, lived, wrought miracles, and was publicly crucified at, or in the vicinity of a great city," and no profane historian makes the least mention of him, until his history had become a tradition,—when his followers are named by Pliny with some terms of commendation; but, by Tacitus, the Christian religion, no doubt misunderstood, is spoken of as a "detestable superstition." This is not a favorable sign of the reality of the history of JESUS.

This view gains additional strength when we find that, in the Apostolical histories, no teacher or follower

of CHRIST is named, out of the Testament itself, for nearly eighty years from the date of the new era, when some disputed epistles of Clement, and the writings of Hermas are *supposed* to date, according to Neander; and then, another blank occurs down to A. D. 110, when some disputed epistles of Ignatius occur: we then pass on to A. D. 120, when the name of Papias occurs, who is remarkable for excessive superstition, and a belief in all sorts of fables.

If we deduct thirty years, as the life-time of JESUS, there will remain still some fifty years to Clement, and about eighty to Ignatius, and nearly a hundred years to Papias, within which a mythical story might pass over into an accredited history in popular opinion. It costs no effort to suppose that this might have happened in an age when printing was unknown, and ignorance almost universal; and still more easily may this be conceived, when we understand that those who knew the real state of the case, as I expect to show, were solemnly sworn to secrecy.

In addition to this, there comes in the philosophical doctrine of the permanent order of nature, tending to enforce the same conclusion; for, although this doctrine is general, and does not definitively fix the line between the natural and the miraculous, yet the doctrine is sufficiently established, among thinking men, to make it certain, to a disciplined mind, that the curing of a physically blind man by spittle and earth; the actual walking on the water by a grown real man; the actual raising of one from the dead, who had been dead

four days, and whose body stank; though, I say, the line between the possible and the impossible be considered as indefinite on the doctrine of order, still such miracles as these must be regarded as impossible, or no relations can be so. If, therefore, we accept these miracles as historical realities, we must refuse the idea of law altogether, and must admit that there is no truth in the doctrine which affirms an *order* in the course of nature; and if this can be affirmed—that is, if the doctrine of order can be denied—we must then deny the possibility of science, in all its branches; and this must be extended to logic and reasoning, for these depend upon the permanent operation of our faculties, and then there could be no further reasoning, or inquiry even into the subject itself under consideration, and we must hold our hands and receive everything as equally possible, and must live in an acknowledged anarchy of both nature and intellect. In such a case, we should have no rule for selecting and preferring, among ancient relations, any one from many; we should have, for example, no ground in reason for rejecting the ancient Greek mythology—for this mythology can only be rejected by that decision of the reason which excludes it from the order of nature, and denies to it a veracious basis in that order, as literal truth. Hence, in modern times, that mythology is looked upon as poetry, or as philosophy in fiction, and by interpretation a great deal of beauty is discovered in it.

These considerations will gain force in proportion as we reflect—with any tolerable reliance upon our

instinctive conceptions and apprehensions of the nature of GOD—upon the impossibility, for example, of realizing, or even imagining, without attempting to understand it, the story of the supernatural birth. That story, if taken literally, stands for us only as a form of words; for no man can conceive, or represent to his imagination even, the truth of it, and perceive, in any manner, how the infinite and invisible GOD could come out of his infinitude, and give occasion, in a finite sphere of action, preserving his infinitude, for a local history of his doings and sayings. Not that GOD does not appear in all history; but, for the very reason that he is in all history, universally, we are obliged to say that he is not specifically in any single history. When we say that GOD is everywhere, we introduce a contradiction into our minds by affirming that he is, or has been, *especially* in some local place; for this implies that he is, or was, not in other places. Those who deny this, do not seem to perceive how easy it is to speak without ideas, that is, without adjusting ideas to their necessary conditions; but words without ideas must necessarily be without sense.

But this may be thought a speculative consideration, or a metaphysical abstraction, which ought not to be urged, as if anything of the kind could put a limit upon the power of GOD. But this, when properly understood, does not assert a limit to the power of GOD. It only shows that there is a limit to our own power of affirmation; it denies to us the privilege of asserting anything in contradiction to the organism of reason

which GOD has given us. In this view, to submit to reason is to submit to GOD. In this obedience, we do not affirm a limitation to GOD, but we confess a limitation upon ourselves. There is no negation in GOD; nothing but infinite affirmation. If, in the imperfection of language, we seem to deny anything of GOD, we can only mean to deny the possibility of our conception of the thing; and this, I say, is simply a confession of the limitations under which we live. But, on the other hand, this is no reason for making affirmations, with respect to the Divine Being, which we do not understand, or which inclose contradictions; for this is so far from a modest confession of weakness, or limitation, that it shows both ignorance and arrogance. It is the indication of a presumptuous spirit, and is in no sense a mark of piety.

I must say just a word on another point which, however, may be better understood as the inquiry proceeds.

It is usual to speak of the four Evangelists as so many distinct and independent witnesses, giving their unbiased testimony to the verity of the recorded life of JESUS. It is not my intention to examine the gospels from this point of view. Here has been an open field of discussion ever since the period when the Bible, as of authority in itself, was urged against the asserted infallibility of the papacy. I only design to say on this point, that I am disposed to side with that school which sees the evidence of the claims of the gospel to

reverence in its doctrines and teachings, rather than to base this claim upon testimony, to be derived from four witnesses, of whose personal history we know next to nothing beyond their own allusions to themselves, and these very scanty. That four gospels, such as we have them, should so far harmonize as to preclude the idea of collusion among the writers for the purpose of deception, does not oblige us to waive the explanation of that harmony to be derived from the fact that only four gospels were selected, from among over thirty, in which many discrepancies might be found, if we had them before us. History assures us that some selection from a confused mass of writings had become necessary, because of the controversies and contentions which had grown out of a multiplicity of documents destitute of that harmony which it was sought to retain, or restore, by the selection itself. The early councils, in determining the canon, excluded all of the relations or histories which were calculated to disturb the harmony they desired to preserve in the church; and when, in addition to this, we find the early fathers and heresiarchs mutually endeavoring to restore the records according to their special opinions of what they ought to be, for this purpose interpolating them, it cannot but put us upon our guard against placing too much reliance upon what is called the harmony of the gospels.

We are, moreover, at liberty to consider that writings may harmonize, from both an historical and an ideal stand-point. No books harmonize so completely

as books of science, which, as we all see, have no external history, except in the lineaments of nature itself, constantly before us or within us. Now, I must plainly say that CHRIST may be regarded from two points of view; as a person, and as a spiritual principle. As a person, let it be admitted that his histories carry marks of general conformity; and if the histories did not inclose miraculous relations, they might never have been questioned; but the presence of such relations has induced many to deny the history, either wholly or in part; while some, perhaps not very many, attribute the appearance of conformity, or what is called the harmony of the gospels, to the simple operation of a common principle working in a body of men associated together in a spiritual brotherhood,—I refer to the Essenes—such as we know did certainly exist among the Jews. This class of men, writing apparently of a person, but really of a principle, besides that they might often have copied from each other, would naturally have produced a few spiritual histories among many, having the general conformity to be seen in the four gospels. The probability of this will increase in proportion as we understand the character of the Essenes, and recognize a reality in their idea of a spiritual life, as being contained or expressed in the Hebrew sacred books. We may observe, also, that we are not in possession of a continuous history of JESUS from infancy through life; but of only one fact after the birth, at twelve years of age, recorded by Luke, and then an account of his doings and teach-

ings, during a period not exceeding three years. Many, indeed, are of the opinion that the whole of this teaching extended over no longer a period than one year—some think it was precisely one year, astronomically measured.

Besides, modern criticism has unquestionably disclosed many dislocations in the gospels, very troublesome to a mere literalist. Not to know this, is to be unacquainted with modern critical writings upon this subject. But such difficulties cannot, in the least, disturb the view I hope to present, by which it may be seen that the truth of Christianity exists independently of all such criticism. When CHRIST said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," he expressed a truth which, as it was true before the written gospels appeared, so it would survive their disappearance if they could be destroyed.

SECTION II.

Thus far I have set out the negative view; and if there were no other I should rest in this, and would deny the reality of the history of Jesus, so far as it embodies the miraculous, and should think myself honoring God in doing so; for it is not paying suitable respect to his wisdom, or power, to receive the story of Jesus as literally true. God has not shown his light to one age, or race, and then abandoned it to the chances of transmission to other ages and countries by fallible means, which man may misunderstand or misemploy to his own, or his neighbor's injury. The truth of God is eternal, and can neither be put into old bottles, nor into bottles liable to grow old.

But there is another point of view, from which a sublime spiritual history may be seen, in the external and mythical representations presented in the gospels; the same spiritual view which, seen through the veil of the Old Testament, carried into captivity the faculties of St. Paul, and made him a preacher of the word of God, that is, of Truth.

To see this may require some study and patience, and perhaps some self-denial,—not without its reward—

the first step in which may be the admission that we may have something to learn on this subject, which may possibly run counter to the prejudices of a life-time of acquiescence in formalized creeds; and yet it shall present a true view of CHRISTIANITY—such as we may feel certain would have been acceptable to St. Paul himself, who, as I expect to show, asserted a doctrine, as primitive Christianity, which has been measurably lost for many ages, but which ought to be revived and reasserted.

To understand this view, I will suppose there is a general acquaintance with the Scriptures; first, as an external representation, from which a certain internal view is to arise, this latter being something quite different from a dreamy idealism, which is so apt to run into an imaginative enthusiasm, evincing illusion or delusion, rather than sober sense;—for let us hope that one may be a true Christian and yet be a sensible man.

An acquaintance with the Scriptures being thus assumed, I would ask next, that the character of the ESSENES, as described by Philo and Josephus, be not merely glanced at, but carefully studied; and, of the Essenes, particularly that portion of them described by Philo, under the name of THERAPEUTÆ, in his Treatise on the Contemplative Life.

The account by Josephus may be found in two places; in the Antiquities, book 2d, sec. 8; and in the Wars, book 18, sec. 1. In Philo, there are three places where the ESSENES are described, to wit: in an Essay

"on the Virtuous being also Free," (Bohn's ed., vol. 3, p. 523, &c.;) again, among what are called "Fragments," (vol. 4;) but principally, in the entire Essay "On the Contemplative Life," (vol. 4.)

It will be instructive to read these accounts carefully and thoughtfully, and to note the similitudes between the doctrines of the Essenes and those of the gospels; not that those of the latter do not transcend everything reported of the Essenes by Philo and Josephus, for these writers must not be supposed fully acquainted with, and disposed to publish, the Essene doctrines, since these were kept secret with the greatest possible care. The members of the brotherhood were admitted into the fraternity only after a three years' novitiate, and they were then not only sworn to secrecy, but were sworn also not to commit any portion of their doctrine to writing, except in allegory and symbolism, "as they received it;" and it will be seen that they were instructed only by means of allegories and symbolic representations.

These people were called "HOLY," because of their "piety and devotion to GOD." They had everything in common, and no one suffered from the want of anything that another had. A most remarkable feature in their history was their custom of assembling and listening to interpretations of the Hebrew sacred writings, from the Elders among them; and here we may consider the important statement of Philo, which furnishes the key to their own allegorical books, to wit:

"*And these explanations of the Sacred Scriptures*

are delivered by mystic expressions in allegories; for the whole of the LAW *appears to these men to resemble a living animal, and its express commandments seem to be the* BODY, *and the invisible meaning under and lying beneath the plain words resembles the* SOUL, *in which the rational soul begins most excellently to contemplate what belongs to itself, as in a mirror, beholding in these very words the exceeding beauty of the sentiments, and unfolding and explaining the symbols, and bringing the secret meaning to the light of all who are able, by the light of a slight intimation, to perceive what is unseen by what is visible.*"

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this statement, in view of the subject under examination.

In another place the ESSENES are said "*to take up the Sacred Scriptures and philosophize concerning them, investigating the allegories of their national philosophy, since they look upon their literal expressions as symbols of some secret meaning of nature, intended to be conveyed in those figurative expressions.*"

They are said, also, "*to have writings of ancient men, who, having been the founders of one sect or another, have left behind them many memorials of the allegoric system of writing and explanation, and they imitate the general fashion of their sect; so that they do not occupy themselves solely in contemplation, but they likewise compose psalms and hymns to* GOD *in every kind of meter and melody imaginable.*"

. These extracts furnish but a slight specimen of the character of this extraordinary sect of the Jews, and for full satisfaction it is necessary to have recourse to the works from which they are taken, viz.: the works of Philo and Josephus.

I will just say, in passing, that, in consequence of the similitude of the doctrines and usages of the ESSENES to those of the CHRISTIANS, as founded upon the New Testament, many have attempted to show, or have asserted—for it is but bare assertion—that the Essenes were the Christians, as having had an origin subsequent to the publication of the gospel. But no competent scholar assents to this, Basnage, among others, denying it; while Josephus speaks of the temperate habits of the Essenes with the highest eulogy, by which, as he says, many of them lived to the advanced age of one hundred years. Now, it is impossible that a sect originating at, or after the publication of the gospel, could have furnished examples of followers reaching the age of one hundred years, during the life-time of Josephus. Besides, it is well known that the Free Masons of the present day not only claim, through their accredited lecturers, as by Dr. Oliver and others, that Free Masonry has come down from the Essenes; but they assert that the Essenes were in possession of what they call the Temple secrets, in the days of Solomon. It is impossible, therefore, for a single moment, to allow that the Essenes were not older than the publication of the gospel of CHRIST. Among

others, Eusebius himself endeavors to make it appear that the Essenes were the original Christians, which opinion led him to make a most remarkable statement in regard to their secret books, which will be referred to in its proper place.

Mr. De Quincey, a spirited, but not a profound writer, has undertaken to show a perfect parallel between the doctrines of the Essenes and those announced in the gospels; and he asserts that the similitude is so exact and complete that, unless the credit of Josephus can be destroyed, by which it might be inferred that he fraudulently suppressed the name of the Christians, and substituted that of the Essenes, in his account of this sect, it must be confessed that there was no need of the appearance of Christ, as his doctrines were all anticipated. This writer forgot that, for his purpose, it was not only necessary to destroy the credit of Josephus, but that of Philo also—a much more important witness. But the Essay in question is only an idle exercise of ingenuity, serving but to show the importance of the sect of the Essenes in the history of Christianity.

I would now desire the following consideration to be maturely weighed: that, in every nation, there may always be made, or conceived, a division of the people into the intelligent and the unintelligent. It is unnecessary to speculate upon the proportions and gradations in these, or as to where the line may be drawn which should mark the separation. The least obser-

vation must satisfy us that such a division may always be made, more particularly in long-established governments, and still more certainly, or distinctly, in theocratic governments; the main distinction turning upon the principle of obedience to the law, one portion obeying the law from intelligence and insight into the reason of the law, and the other yielding a blind, or constrained obedience, from the force of education, custom, habit, &c.

Among the Jews, the latter described class, we can not but suppose, would include the *Sadducees*, who were a tribe of sensualists; and the *Pharisees*, who were strict observers of all the forms and ceremonies of the law, hoping to win the rewards of piety, which are essentially free, by an outward compliance with usages and ceremonies, which had so far taken the place of the spirit of the law, that they are said to have made the Commandments of God of no effect, by their traditions, (Matt. xv. 6.)

I now appeal to a volume made up from early works on Christianity, which have been preserved in the writings of the ancient Fathers of the Church, and translated principally by Archbishop *Wake*. It has been published under the title of the "Apocryphal New Testament."

It is well known that, over and above these few preserved relics of the early ages of Christianity, there were a great many similar books then in existence, including over thirty, some say over fifty gospels, nearly

all of which have perished, simply because the Athanasian Council did not choose to retain them as canonical, and we of this age are deprived of the opportunity of consulting them.

Assuredly we may deny the right of the Athanasian Council to confine our judgment of CHRISTIANITY to what may depend upon the few books the members of that Council saw fit to pronounce genuine; but as their action has had the effect to throw into oblivion nearly all of the other records, we are restricted to the volume just named, where we may find, however, many valuable hints for understanding the recognized canon itself, even granting the spurious character of some portions of the apocryphal volume.

Among these records I find the Epistle of Barnabas of great importance, as a specimen of allegorical interpretation, such as I suppose was common among the Essenes, and which has a remarkable parallel in a portion of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. I refer especially to the interpretation by Barnabas of certain portions of the Law, and to his exposition of what is meant by the TEMPLE OF GOD; and not to the fanciful interpretation, if it is one, of the number 318.

But the Visions, Commands, and Similitudes of Hermas, in the same volume, are much more important. Without dwelling on details, I will refer to the eighth Similitude, where a mystical Shepherd is introduced as expounding a *Vision*, in these words:

"*This great tree which covers the plains and mountains, and all the earth, is the* LAW OF GOD, *published*

throughout the whole world. Now, this Law is the Son of God, *who is preached to all the ends of the earth. The people that stand under its shadow, are those who have heard his preaching, and believe,*" &c.

In these Visions of Hermas, which may possibly be a genuine Essene work, the Son of God is spoken of in several ways; here, we see, as the Law of God; but, manifestly, not the written Law, for that was not published to all the ends of the earth. The Spirit of the Law, that is, the Life of it, was therefore referred to; for this is "preached" in the consciences of all men throughout the world.

In another place an Angel is represented as expounding another Vision, (in the ninth Similitude,) and says: "*I will show thee all those things which the Spirit spake to thee under the figure of a Church. For that* Spirit *is the* Son of God."

The Church had appeared to Hermas in the form of a woman. Here, therefore, we see the Spirit of the Church called the Son of God. This is an instructive passage if we consider it well. We may remember that St. Paul speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ, whose Spirit, therefore, is the Spirit or Life of the Church, the same Spirit which Hermas calls the Son of God. In these different forms of expression we need only see so many modes of personifying a certain invisible Spirit, the Spirit of the Church; or, of the Hebrew Scriptures, according to the Essenes; and yet the same Spirit, the mother of itself, and its own father no less, however strange this language may

seem,—though these expressions, father and mother, are both relative, and suppose a third something, which is neither, yet both, in which are inclosed all mysteries and riches, even the "unsearchable riches of Christ," (Ephes. iii. 8.) From a very early period in the world the invisible father and visible mother have been symbolized by the sun and moon, the mediating principle being often represented by an all-seeing eye between the two.

If, now, we bear in mind the view of the ESSENES, who regarded the Sacred Scriptures as an animate being, having a Letter as the Body, and a Soul as the Spirit, —and that, as a secret brotherhood, they were under the most solemn oath not to reveal their doctrine verbally, and not to write of it except in allegory and symbolism, "as they received it,"—it will appear the most natural thing in the world to suppose that some of their own expository or interpretative books would be written on the simple idea of personifying the SOUL, that is, the LIFE of the Scriptures,—or of the Church, this being the same Spirit,—and then representing this person, thus set forward, as speaking forth the wisdom of the fathers of the nation, and teaching the same by parables and by symbolic miracles, the interpretation of the latter always turning upon moral disorders cured by a spiritual life of Truth and Virtue.

Such a purpose being conceived—within a secret society, held together by a common doctrine regarded as too sacred for swine—many might adopt it, or copy from each other, with additions, producing a general

harmony in the midst of variety. This would account for the very numerous gospels said to have been in existence in the early ages of Christianity, most of which have perished. It would account, also, for there being no mention made of the Essenes in the New Testament, as preserved to us, except as the "brethren;" for the Essenes knew each other as brethren, as the Free Masons do at the present day, who claim a descent from them. Whoever determined to set the example of writing in that manner would naturally have selected the name of a known *victim to truth*, and such victims are not scarce in any age, as the foundation of the picture; and such a name might have been at hand in that of JESUS, though no mention is made of such a person in history, because the actual events of his life might not have awakened universal attention.

Among the extraordinary circumstances connected with this history, it is not among the least remarkable that JESUS left no writings embodying his teachings. The literalist is precluded from the plea, in explanation of this, that writing is a fallible channel, furnishing an unsuitable medium for divine instruction; for he would bind us to the letter, imperfect as it certainly is. But, again, imperfect as writing is, mere oral teaching is much more evanescent and less to be relied upon, particularly when it can only be transmitted by writings, themselves the work of subordinate agents. But, from the point of view here proposed, we may easily see the reason why JESUS, as a person, left no writings behind him.

The gospels were written in Greek, and not in Hebrew, unless we take into view one, now lost, supposed to have been a gospel by Matthew—by some imagined to have furnished the principal materials for the first three gospels in the Canon. This must seem very strange, except on the supposition of an Alexandrian origin. We may explain this by attributing them to the Essenes, or to that portion of the Essenes known as Therapeutæ, who resided at Alexandria, where Greek learning was cultivated, and where the Greek language was spoken. The scene was laid, with great poetic propriety, at Jerusalem; because that was the head-quarters of the worldly priesthood, who had made the law of none effect by their traditions; and these were made the murderers of the Spirit, personified in Christ, to represent the doctrine that the letter killeth; and yet the Spirit of Truth was exhibited as rising again, and appearing to its followers; for this illustrates the privilege of those who possess faith in GOD'S Holy Law in the heart—the true Christ, according to St. Paul—all of which I expect to show.

I have now, as may be seen, expressed the opinion that, in the history, or histories of Christ, we have a representation, in the form of history, or biography, of the LIFE, or SPIRIT, of the Hebrew sacred books, such as it was conceived to be by the members of a secret society, or brotherhood, described by Josephus as the ESSENES, and referred to, also, under this name, by PHILO, who gives, however, a more detailed account

of them as THERAPEUTÆ, or physicians, — meaning physicians of the soul, as the historian expressly states.

I am aware that many students of this subject have seen the likeness between the gospel teachings and those of the Essenes, but I know of no one who has attempted to point out the precise view I shall endeavor to make plain. The likeness in question is indeed too visible to escape notice, but the reason for it seems not to have been observed, and yet this is the key of the whole question.

Before leaving this section, and passing on to the proofs I shall adduce in favor of the view I have intimated, I wish to make one remark upon the extent and nature of the negation suggested in this, and in the preceding section. I know that many are of opinion that, without a strict belief in the personality of JESUS, there can be no such thing as Christianity. The personal life of Christ is supposed to be the model set up for the imitation of all Christians; and, if that personality be denied, it is thought that nothing would remain to be imitated, and Christianity would become a name without substance.

I might here point out the purely external view which this opinion presents of Christianity, as if its entire life lay in the past, and is comprised in certain written representations we have of it, the independent spiritual existence of CHRIST being thereby virtually ignored, or placed, at all events, beyond the reach of man, except through the instrumentality of writings; so that, if the writings should be lost or corrupted, the

Spirit (of Truth) would be thereby destroyed or falsified! But let this pass. I have already pointed out the portion of the history which appears to call for interpretation, without supposing an actual reality to it; and this is the miraculous portion of it. There is no disposition to bring into question any other part of the history. Now, this portion of the history neither is, nor can be, an object of imitation to any one. No Christian of the present day assumes to imitate CHRIST in working miracles; and, therefore, if this portion of the history shall be considered symbolical and mythical, and this alone be studied with a view to interpretation, not only would there be nothing removed from the history admitting of imitation, but we may hope, by means of interpretation, to bring this very portion itself within the field, even of possible imitation, by exhibiting its natural side, or point of view. As miraculous, it cannot be imitated; but as symbolical teaching, it may be full of the most valuable and important instruction.

Besides, no historical evidence whatever can establish the truth, or the fact, of a miracle; not because experience has certified to us, or acquainted us, with the order of nature, as was erroneously asserted by Hume; but, contrarily, it is precisely because no amount or extent of experience can ever acquaint us with that order. No fact can be shown to transcend the power of nature until we are in a condition to know the whole power of nature: but this cannot be known by what is called experience.

The conception of the orderly course of nature is not derived from experience, but stands in the minds of those who hold it as a first principle or intuition, and it is simply a mode of affirming the immutability of GOD. This immutability may be confirmed to us by observing an ORDER in nature, that is, by experience; but it is a contradiction to suppose that God's unchangeable nature can be evinced by that species of mutability which a miracle supposes; that is, by a *change* or an interruption of the orderly course of nature. If a miracle could be proved, it would prove GOD a mutable being, and this would unsettle or destroy the ground of all proof.

It is certainly a strange vagary to regard it as impious to look upon a reported miracle as unreal, and to seek a mythical significance in it, when this denial itself is nothing but a necessary result of the profoundest and most religious conviction of GOD'S verity. GOD is Truth, and cannot deny his own nature, and he manifests his immutability in the order of his nature. If this could change or be broken or interrupted in any manner, then GOD himself would lose his nature and character. He would no longer be the adorable perfection in which the idea of an unchangeable order is included, but would fall into a finite being; that is, our conception of him would compel us so to regard him in fact, though we might continue to address him in lofty language.

But these remarks are not made for the purpose of expressing a definite idea of GOD. They are intended

only to set forward the incompatibility of the notion of a miracle with any true conceptions of the nature of GOD.

It is thought, I know, by many, that miracles are the proper authentication of CHRIST'S character as the SON of GOD. I shall have something to say on this point in another place, and at present will merely remark that a miracle is a mere something to wonder at. As a miracle, to be really and truly such, must be something beyond the field of nature, it cannot furnish a ground for any inference beyond itself. We cannot reason, from such a fact, *into* the order of nature—for, by supposition, it lies beyond this order; and as we know nothing of any other order than the order of nature, and know nothing of any connection a miracle might have with other things beyond the natural order of events, we can infer nothing legitimately from a miracle beyond itself, except, assuming it to be an effect, it would presuppose an adequate cause, but without explaining anything as to its nature; for philosophers agree that effects manifest, indeed, but do not explain causes. A miracle stands, I say, unconnected with things in nature; and, as we know nothing of its connections beyond nature, we can no more adduce a miracle to prove its worker to be the SON OF GOD, than we can adduce it to prove that the square on the hypothenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares upon the other two sides. There is no connection of ideas between the postulate of a miracle and anything else whatever, either within or without

nature; and, therefore, no inferences can be drawn from a miracle to anything else, either within or beyond nature.

A seeming miracle may, nevertheless, convey a beautiful teaching, and this is what I hope to show.

I must suggest, in passing, that we may, or rather we must, narrow our idea of CHRIST, by seeing him only in the recorded history, and forgetting that CHRIST, as the true object of faith, "was" before Abraham. If we can not see him as before all records of him, and independently of these records, how, I would ask, can we see him as present in the history of man, of whom he is the Life? How, I would ask, can he, in such a view, be recognized as present now to the believer? A historical CHRIST—that is, an external history of CHRIST—can do no more than awaken in the soul of the believer a sense of that spiritual reality which corresponds to the outward history, and becomes the true ground of faith in the reality of the history itself. But as, in this inward CHRIST, there is nothing corresponding, or answering to the miracles as external realities, their presence in the history, regarded as real, is so far from furnishing a support to the history, that they become necessarily an obstacle to faith. It is my wish to remove this obstacle, by showing that the miracles, as such, were introduced, not as historical realities, but as symbolical of spiritual realities, to which there is a real correspondence in the believing soul.

By this process I would endeavor to bring to light the possible unity of the inward and the outward CHRIST,

No history can furnish, legitimately, a law to faith, but all history, on the contrary, is subject to the law of faith in the truth, which, in the end, will be seen to be the law of life.

We may well consider, in this connection, that those who confine our knowledge of CHRIST to the limits of the written record, lose all hope of supplying any portion of the unwritten history referred to in the closing verse of John's gospel: "And there are also many other things which JESUS did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

This passage in John cannot be supposed to refer to the acts of a historical person, but must refer to the spiritual CHRIST, as the Life of the world: whose history must, indeed, be commensurate with the world itself. It is plain, from this passage, that in the written history or histories of CHRIST, we have but a fragment, and a very small fragment, of his life; and if we insist upon knowing him only as he is presented to us in the written records, we must know him only as reduced in his proportions to the dimensions of those records. But this would be to know CHRIST only externally, as a dead history; and to miss him as he is a divine life—perhaps, precisely under the judgment of the text: "whosoever will save his life, shall lose it," &c.

SECTION III.

THERE are several distinct indications in the gospels of the representative character of CHRIST,—passages by which the writers of the gospels indicate, as I say, the two things, *the Letter and the Spirit* of the sacred books, the object of the gospel-writers being to exhibit in the form of the history of a person, the doctrine of the ESSENES; that is, their interpretation of the Hebrew sacred books, the spirit of which they regarded as a certain invisible LIFE, morally and spiritually active in the soul of man. This invisible Life is sometimes called, in both the Old and the New Testaments, the Son of Man, and sometimes the SON OF GOD. It is also called the Holy One of Israel, and by many other names. If we call it a person, we are in danger of circumscribing it and limiting it by an imaginary form, which cannot but tend to deprive us of the true idea; for it is not a person in the sense in which we use this word. Yet a person is the best or truest image of it, and, therefore, some of the sacred writers have personified it. We shall see, however, that it is an impersonal spirit, called by CHRIST the Spirit of Truth; and as it was the "moving" spirit of the writers of the Jewish

sacred Scriptures, it is called the Spirit of the Letter of those Scriptures, and is the perpetual interpreter, not only of the letter of the older sacred writings, but of all scriptures or writings whatsoever. The Essenes regarded the Hebrew sacred books as an animate creature, having a body and a soul; and the gospels, as symbolical interpretations of those books, give us many signs or indications of the design of their writers, who must be considered as writing under the restraints of an oath of secrecy, by which they had bound themselves not to throw what they called pearls to swine.

As examples of the method by which the writers of the gospels indicate the double character of the Scriptures, to wit, its *Letter* and *Spirit*, personified in CHRIST, I refer to the following passages:

In the third chapter of John we have the story of the interview between CHRIST and Nicodemus, in which the necessity of being born again is insisted upon; and Nicodemus is instructed that, Except a man be born of *Water* and the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the KINGDOM OF GOD.

In this declaration we must consider CHRIST as speaking in the name of the Scriptures, mystically teaching Nicodemus the doctrine of the ESSENES that, although the Scriptures are able to make a man wise unto salvation, yet, to this end, it is necessary not only to receive them in their outward form, as so much *Letter*, here symbolized by *Water*, but that the internal sense must also be understood, symbolized by the *Spirit*.

To be born of Water and the Spirit means to understand the Scriptures in both their outward and their inward sense; that is, their *water* and *spirit*, or Letter and Spirit. The Scriptures are first received in the Letter; but in souls prepared for it, there enters a knowledge of their internal or spiritual sense; and this constituted the New birth among the Jews; which Nicodemus is represented as not understanding. For this ignorance he was rebuked, because, being a Teacher in Israel, JESUS assumes that he ought to have known of this doctrine. It was not new, therefore, as declared by CHRIST, but was a doctrine which, as we see, ought to have been familiar to one occupying the place of a Teacher, and which was no doubt well understood by the Essenes, as being their peculiar doctrine. To understand the Scriptures in this sense, is expressed elsewhere by the figure of *eating* a book; which means to receive and appropriate the book in both its outward and its inward sense,—as we may see in Ezekiel, chapters ii. and iii., where we read that the roll, that is, the book to be eaten was written within and without; that is, it had an inward and an outward sense. The same figure and with the same sense occurs in the Revelation.

Again: in John ix. 6, Christ is represented as curing a blind man by clay made of *spittle* and *earth*.

Here we have the same indication of the representative character of CHRIST. The blind man we must consider as morally and spiritually blind, not physically blind; and this spiritual blindness is removed by the

Scriptures, which are metaphorically represented as anointing the eyes, that is, the eyes of the understanding, with its *Letter* and *Spirit*—here represented as *earth* and *spittle*. The illustration in this case is presented in a very simple figure, yet it is highly instructive to one who recognizes the metaphorical and figurative character of a large portion of the sacred writings. Blindness, in the Scriptures, is a mere figure for ignorance; thus, the ignorant Pharisees are called blind guides, Matt. xxiii. 16.

In John vi. 53, the same doctrine is presented in a much bolder figure. Here CHRIST is made to say,—Except ye eat of the FLESH of the Son of Man, and drink of his BLOOD, ye have no LIFE in you.

Here, again, CHRIST must be regarded as the Scriptures personified; and the writer of the gospel makes him teach in this strong, yet figurative language, and in verses connected with it, that the mere knowledge of the Letter, which is compared to *flesh*, "profiteth nothing," (verse 63,) but that it is necessary to understand also the *Spirit*; that is, to drink of the *blood* of the SON of MAN; for it is the BLOOD, the *Spirit* that "quickeneth," (verse 63.) This figure was particularly appropriate among the Jews, who believed that the life of an animal was in its blood,—the object of this teaching being to set forth the necessity of receiving the very LIFE of the sacred Hebrew writings in order to salvation.

Again: in the symbolic scene presented at the crucifixion, John xix. 34, a soldier is represented as piercing the side of JESUS, when, forthwith came thereout *Blood* and *Water*.

JESUS, however real a person he might have been, and there is no disposition to deny the reality of his life, within the range of possibility, was made, nevertheless, the basis of a mythical history of the Life or power of the sacred writings, as understood by the Essenes; and in this allusion to *Blood* and *Water*, as flowing from a wound in his side, the writer of the gospel indicates, as I say, his representative character, and that he represented the *Spirit* and the *Letter* of the Hebrew Scriptures,—here symbolized by *Blood* and *Water*.

I desire to say here, because I do not wish to be misunderstood, that I look upon Jesus Christ as a real person, and believe that he was a great Teacher of the doctrine of the Spirit, not only as underlying the letter of the Hebrew sacred books, but as the Spirit which lives independently of those books—which preceded them and will survive them. This Spirit is sometimes called the Son of Man, and sometimes the Son of God; and these titles were applied to Christ, not as being in an exclusive sense that Spirit, but because he was preeminently animated by it. The Spirit is the light of the world; and Christ, as a living expression of it, called himself the light of the world,—though we are perfectly at liberty to look upon this declaration as having been

made, not by him, but for him, by those who wrote the gospels, in which we must see a real natural life elevated into a parabolic representation of that higher life which CHRIST really taught, but which must forever stand above the real, as the ideal is ever in advance of the actual.

But there are still other indications in the gospels of the representative character of Christ, which I must adduce in support of the view I am presenting.

I point now, without the least suspicion of error, to the sacred and impressive supper scene; where the *Letter* is represented by the *Bread*, and the *Spirit* by the *Wine*, which are called the *Body* and the *Blood* of CHRIST:—that is, CHRIST represented the Sacred Scriptures, having a *Letter* and a *Spirit*, symbolized by his *Body* and *Blood*, (or *flesh* and *blood*, in the language of a preceding chapter,) which are here figured by *Bread* and *Wine*. In all of these references, we have but an accumulation of symbols for the Sacred Scriptures, as having a *Letter* and a *Spirit* represented by CHRIST.

Again: we have the same indication of the representative character of CHRIST in the two miracles, of feeding the multitudes—five thousand in the one case, and four thousand in the other; in each case both *Loaves* and *Fishes* being used; the *loaves* symbolizing the written Law, and the *fishes* its living Truth. I shall show, in its proper place,* from the gospel itself,

* See Section XV.

the most decisive proof that neither of these miracles were real; but by *loaves* and *fishes* is to be understood DOCTRINE, the miracles being merely a species of parables, only they come to us as if acted instead of being spoken. They are very certainly *written*, for us, and not acted.

It would require much time and space to exhibit the teaching designed to be conveyed by these two miracles; but my present object requires only that I refer to them as among the many instances in which two things are exhibited by the writers of the gospels, having a common signification, to wit: the Letter and the Spirit of the Hebrew sacred writings.

In order to elicit any sense whatever from the various symbols used in the above passages from Scripture, we are compelled to seek some common point or principle, to which they may all be referred. Water and Spirit most assuredly mean the same things as bread and wine; and these again the same things as the body (or flesh) of the Son of Man and his blood; and the only point is to discover some key, which, in explaining one of the references shall explain them all. This key is the Scriptures, which must be understood as having an outward and an inward sense; that is, a letter and spirit represented by Christ.

But, as symbolism often admits of more than one interpretation, it is proper to say, that the symbols, flesh and blood, bread and wine, water and spirit, may be understood as applicable to nature; nature being re-

garded as a composite of *matter* and *spirit;* and if found in a philosophical work, I should be disposed to seek their meaning from this point of view; but, as they are used in the gospels, their interpretation must be found in the Scriptures.

There is one other place in which the representative character of CHRIST is taught by a very beautiful symbolic scene, to wit: John xvii.—in the account of the Transfiguration. In this scene we are taught that CHRIST represented both the *Law*, figured by Moses, and the *Prophets*, figured by Elias;—that is, the SPIRIT of TRUTH is the same, whether recognized in the *Law* or in the *Prophets*. Of these Two, it may be said, that it is the office of the prophet to declare eternal TRUTH; which, because it is eternal, has no special reference to times, places, or persons; but the office of a Law-giver is to announce commandments, and to institute significant ceremonies and usages, the object of all of these being to guide the Soul into the way of TRUTH; but, in order that these laws, &c., may be enduring, they must be based upon some true, that is, eternal principles. Therefore, CHRIST, as personating the TRUTH in this high sense, must be exhibited as representing both the LAW and the Prophets; and this is beautifully done in the Transfiguration scene.

Writings serve to convey ideas and impressions from man to man; and when the ideas refer to external things, capable of being described by imagery, a didactic or direct mode of statement will serve the

purpose. But when the object is to excite or bring into action latent and invisible principles of the soul, another method has always been resorted to. This is especially the case with respect to the religious nature of man. No one man's religion can be transferred to another. Religion is a Life, and not a transferable possession. The object of religious instruction is not to communicate historical or other information of the past, but to excite a principle often dormant, though said to be in every man, *in potentia*. To bring this principle into action, the sacred writers have avoided direct statements, which must always be partial on this subject, and have resorted to symbolism. The truth of the Hebrew Scriptures is not any definable or representable external thing, and cannot be described by human language, and held up for the recognition of man as something outward. It is essentially inward and invisible, and though called a spirit, this word does not convey an idea of it. It is not properly even an idea, an idea of life, but life itself. Therefore the Essenes taught their initiates and edified each other by means of allegorical and symbolical books calculated to excite into action this profoundest experience possible to man. Let any one consider himself called upon to state definitely what he understands by the Truth of the Scriptures, and the more he feels that it is a Life, or principle of living, the more he will find it difficult to express it; and he will then the better understand why so many have written about it in a mystical and mysterious manner, and may, perhaps, become aware

of many other reasons for that mode of writing on the subject.

Be the reasons what they may, it is certain that the gospels are not written in an open didactic style, except as to mere form, but after a symbolic and parabolic method, the form, when the spirit is not recognized, being altogether delusive, and was intended to be so, the writers being sworn not to disclose their secret to the uninitiated, who were considered as dogs and swine, so far as the secret was concerned.

When this is admitted, it must be seen that some sort of interpretation is necessary; and the only question then is, as to what interpretation will explain, if not the whole of the writings in detail, at least, the largest portion of them. For this purpose I have found that, by assuming a Truth in the Old Testament, and considering that Truth as represented by the nature of man, personified, and put forward to teach the doctrine of truth; by this means, I say, many of the otherwise inexplicable sayings of Christ seem to admit of a ready explanation; and among them, all of those double allusions just recited, by which, as I suppose, the Scriptures were intended, as having a double sense, an outward and an inward sense, that is, a letter and a spirit; these allusions, thus far, only tending to set forth the fact, that there is such an inward or spiritual sense in the older Scriptures, but without, as yet, disclosing what it is in any one particular.

That there is a double sense in the Scriptures is elicited by assuming a double sense in each and every

one of the passages already cited from the gospels, which are themselves interpreted by the discovery that they all refer to the Old Testament under the several symbols of water and spirit, flesh and blood, bread and wine, &c., for, as I have said, all of these must have some common meaning. Their own sense is simply this: they serve to teach that the older Scriptures have a double meaning; and we shall yet see, that to know the inward or spiritual sense was what the Essenes called the children's bread—bread itself being a symbolic word for doctrine. The inward truths of Scripture the Essenes also called *pearls*, which were not to be made common, because the common people, it was supposed, either could not understand them or would not profit by them. Hence the caution, not to cast pearls before swine.

The simplicity of this principle does not deny the Truth or impair it in any manner; but, on the contrary, rather asserts and fortifies it. The very sacredness of the Truth is among the reasons why symbolism has been used to set it forth; such a mode of writing having formerly been considered necessary, not only as a means of confining the knowledge of a certain doctrine to a secret society, but necessary, also, to protect what was regarded as a sacred truth from the contempt of the profane; it being, in the language of Roger Bacon, too often the custom of the vulgar to despise what they do not understand. But I am disposed to consider this as said of a former age, and as inapplicable to man in the nineteenth century.

To return to my subject: The uniform doctrine of the New Testament sets forth the *Spirit*—the *Spirit* of the *Letter*—as that which is to be sought by those who would have life indeed. The *Letter*, or ceremonial law, is comparatively worthless. St. Paul's language is very decided: "The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." But this agrees with John, vi. 63: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the Flesh profiteth nothing;" the flesh here referred to being the manna of *Moses*—that is, the Law of Moses; which, in verse 32, strange to say, we are told was not from Heaven, though Moses tells us it was! In this same Spirit, CHRIST had just warned his hearers (verse 27) to "labor not for the *meat* which perisheth, but for that *meat* which endureth unto everlasting life." This enduring meat is Christ, as the Spirit, which, in John iv. 11, is called *living water*, instead of the water of Jacob's well. Here we have, indeed, another instance of the symbolism of which I have been speaking. Jacob's well represents the written Law, while the Spirit of the Law is called "living water," which Christ is said to give. This living water is Christ, the Spirit—the Spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures. There is a particular beauty here in the mode of representing this gift of living water, as the gift of Christ; that is, of the Spirit, as if it was given by itself, or, in other words, gives itself; for no one seeks the Truth, as knowing it. We do not seek what we know; but, believing there is a truth to be known, we seek it; and yet, when it is received, it is discovered to be, not what we had per-

haps imagined it to be, but something of such a nature that, but for an intuition bordering on inspiration, and hence called a grace, we should not have discovered it; and we learn, then, that, in an ordinary sense, we might have sought it forever without finding it, if the grace of God had been withheld; and yet, again, if we had not sought it, we had never found it at all—so intimately is the possession of this thing bound up with a certain faith in it.

As Christ, in the passage above, John iv. 14, is said to give the *living water;* so, in a similar metonymic language, John xiv. 27, Christ says—"Peace I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto you," etc.; for the peace of the Spirit of truth is that of the living water also, and in these cases, as in many others, Christ speaks as the personified Spirit, and also as its peace.

This peace is given only to the disciples or followers of Truth. It is never given to the wicked—"there is no peace for the wicked"—for the wicked have departed from the Truth.

In a similar manner, Christ says, John viii. 36: If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed; for the Son is Truth, as we might infer even from the very language of this chapter, verse 32, where it is declared that—The Truth shall make you free; though in verse 31, the knowledge of the truth is conditioned upon continuing in the word; but this, again, is the word of truth.

The doctrine of the new birth has been the source

of great difficulty in the Christian Church, from, as I suppose, a misunderstanding of the real import of the doctrine, as it comes to us in the gospels. There is a positive ground in nature for this doctrine, independently of the Scriptures; and we may see that it is recognized in the institutes of Menu. All Hindoos of the Brahman order, or caste, are supposed to be "twice-born," and they are called the Twice-born; the first birth being from "a mortal mother," the second from "a spiritual mother;" and this last is supposed to transcend infinitely in value the first. In Dubois' India, the ceremony of the supposed passage into the second birth is described with considerable minuteness; though the real second birth is not amenable to any ceremony whatever: "The wind bloweth as it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The second birth, of which we read in the gospels, must be supposed to have had its rise under the influence of the Jewish Scriptures; and it means, strictly, an entrance into or a knowledge of the Spirit of the Hebrew sacred writings—for these were regarded as divine; and a knowledge of the Spirit of them constituted the second birth to a Jew as such.

In the Christian Church, very few passages of Scripture have been more handled than the declaration of CHRIST to Nicodemus, requiring a new birth as a necessary condition, before it is possible to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and the doctrine has occa-

sioned about an equal amount of intense suffering and extravagant joy—neither of them, perhaps, coming within the bounds of rationality, possibly because the doctrine is delivered with obscurity, and no marks, or signs, are given, by which a compliance with it may be known.

If the several texts referring to this doctrine are taken literally, it will be impossible to extract any meaning out of them; and all men, of plain common-sense understandings, are truly in the condition of Nicodemus in respect to it. It is easy to denounce this state as carnal, &c., and threaten endless woe upon a well-disposed soul, who, because, perhaps, of being unconscious of having done, or designed evil in the world, may be the less accessible to the experience supposed to characterize the new birth. Such a soul finds it difficult to force upon itself that sense of sin which the modern theory seems to require, as a prerequisite to the visitation of grace; but, as the letter demands something, under a tremendous penalty, and that something is wholly indefinite, an immense suffering is gone through by many, in mere anxiety, before there is any internal operation which can be construed into the desired sense of grace. The threatened penalty takes hold more readily of a conscious sinner, because every sinner is a slave, and full of fear by nature; and hence, under fitting external circumstances, a sinner is easily brought into a state of dreadful fear, which, working with a sense of sin, brings the subject of it into a "foretaste of hell," until at last, overcome by exhaus-

tion, he yields himself a confessed criminal, willing to undergo any penalty a supposed angry and vengeful Deity may see fit to impose. This submission is attended with a physiological sense of relief—of ease; and this is presently decided to be the immediate act of GOD, and a communication of his grace, which is then followed by a sense of joy, proportioned to the suffering that led the way to it.

This may properly be called physiological conversion, brought about more by the "hangman's whip," than by any elevated spiritual experience.

There is another species of this operation, where a delicate and upright mind is acted upon, chiefly through the imagination and a sympathetic sensibility, and is brought into a state of inexpressible anguish, until relieved, in some similar manner, by undergoing an internal movement of some sort, which is seized upon as the evidence of a direct interposition of GOD.

Many well-disposed people pass through their whole lives, however, without being brought under these artificial influences, though they may often have witnessed something of the so-called experience, with a mingled feeling of pity and wonder; with, possibly, some occasional self-questionings as to their own state, having no other effect than to fortify a disposition already formed, to "deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before GOD."

To understand the new birth in the Jewish sense, we must cast our eyes over the history of the Jews, and observe the load of ceremonial laws and usages

imposed upon the people as religious; and must consider the 'bondage' of those who lived under them, regarding them as divine in themselves, subjecting an offender in the least point to perdition; and then we must regard that whole system as designed originally to produce a sense of justice and love, as the *Spirit* of those laws and usages. We must then see that CHRIST was set forward as that *Spirit* personified, to declare the spiritual law, as the New Covenant. Then we may easily see in what sense he might be represented as teaching metaphorically the doctrine of the new-birth; that is, the spiritual sense of the law, and as declaring that without such an understanding of the law, no one could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, or into that freedom which St. Paul describes as the freedom of the spirit,—which released him from the bondage of the law.

To see the reasonableness of this view it is only necessary, in addition to the above considerations, to bear in mind, that St. Paul speaks of the Law as gendering bondage, Gal. iv. 24; and we must see, that freedom from this bondage was the freedom he urged, as freedom in *Christ;* that is, in the *Spirit.* To reach that freedom among the Jews it was necessary to be born into a sense of the Truth, as in the Law indeed, but the Law received or understood in its *Spirit;* and this was to be born of *Water* and the *Spirit;* and as CHRIST represented the Life of the Old Testament, this same point is signified by his *Flesh* and *Blood*, &c., the Essenes regarding the Law as a living animal,

comparing the external commands (and ceremonies) to the body, whose soul was the Spirit.

The new birth, therefore, among the Jews may be regarded as a process within their peculiar theocratic condition, living under the most absolute external Law, into the ceremonies of which every Jewish child was industriously and systematically introduced,—formal circumcision taking place on the eighth day after birth.

Now, the whole of the Law was originally framed, I say, with a view to the prosperity and happiness of the child; which, however, the child, while a "minor," could not know; and if it never discovered it, then the child always remained a minor, under what St. Paul called the bondage of the Law. But, in process of time, those who were capable of it, entered into a knowledge of the *Spirit* of the Law; saw and understood the reasons for it; and this was to be born of both, the written and the unwritten Law, symbolized by *water* and *spirit*, *flesh* and *blood*, *bread* and *wine*; and this, in succeeding ages, signified the being born of the Law and the gospel; for the gospel means the spiritual truth of the Hebrew sacred writings, and it is the New, or Second Covenant; yet not as it is written, but as it is seen and known in the *Spirit*.

The whole matter of revivals, and great movements in the church, take place according to uniform Law, though it may be called Spiritual Law; for there is no contingency or accident in the providence of God. While the external Law and ceremonies seem to be in

conformity with the requirements of the spiritual life, men, in passing into the latter, will accept the former; and it is thus continued from generation to generation. But when the external becomes corrupt and loses its conformity with the demands of spiritual life, nothing is more certain than that *protests* will be made, first from individuals, but finally from whole communities. Luther was not an accident in his day.

SECTION IV.

The Gospels are written in pure symbolism. The Letter is one thing, but the Spirit is quite another; and this Spirit is the "faith" or Truth that St. Paul preached as a "mystery," as seen by him through the veil of the Old Testament. St. Paul was not an Essene, but a convert from the Pharisees, and as he declares that he received his truth by inspiration, so he professes to use "great plainness of speech,"—this language itself implying that others had expressed themselves under the cover of veils. But St. Paul himself, although he has written openly on some points, has made use of symbolisms on others, as an examination of his Epistles will very clearly show.

As he is the great asserter of the doctrine of the *Spirit*, it is not out of place here to refer to the remarkable declaration in 2 Cor. v. 16: Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the *flesh:* yea, though we have known Christ after the *flesh*, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

It is important to determine the true sense of this passage, and fortunately this may be done beyond the possibility of doubt. We know that St. Paul never saw Christ as a person in the *flesh*—at his conversion see-

ing him only in the *Spirit*. But if we regard CHRIST in his representative character, as personating the *Letter* and the *Spirit* of the Hebrew sacred Scriptures, and suppose that St. Paul recognized him in that character, then the sense of this passage is very plain, and may be understood in harmony with the whole design of the Epistle, in which St. Paul rebukes the Galatians so severely for yet following the Letter—the Letter of the Old Testament—that is, CHRIST in the *flesh*; for, although he had formerly leaned upon the Letter also, that is, CHRIST in the *flesh*, yet, henceforth, having obtained the *Spirit*, he determined to build upon the Letter no longer.

That St. Paul, in some instances, by what he says of the *flesh*, refers to the Letter of the older scriptures, is very evident; as, in Gal. iii. 3, where he asks: "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the *Spirit*, are ye now made perfect by the *flesh?*"—for he had just asked the question: "Received ye the *Spirit* by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of *faith?*" By the *flesh*, therefore, he meant the works of the Law, that is the Letter.

But if this reference to Galatians is not sufficiently clear and decisive, let us turn to the Epistle to the Philippians, and we shall see precisely the sense in which St. Paul uses the word *flesh*,—I mean in this Epistle. In the 3d verse of the 3d chapter of this Epistle, we read: For we are the circumcision, which worship GOD in the Spirit, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the *flesh*.

The Apostle has already told us that—He is a Jew that is one inwardly; and (that) circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of GOD, Rom. ii. 29. Here, in this Epistle to the Philippians, we see the same declaration; that those are of the circumcision, that is, Jews indeed, who worship GOD in the Spirit, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the *flesh*;—manifestly meaning CHRIST in the flesh, as this expression is used in 2 Cor. v. 16; for the Apostle immediately adds:—Though I might also have confidence [that is, hope] in the *flesh*. If any man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the *flesh*, I more: [for, as he says, he was] circumcised the eighth day, [was] of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; [and] as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; [and as] touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. Verses 4, 5, and 6.

Here we have what St. Paul meant by the *flesh* very minutely defined; so minutely that there can be no doubt about it.

But; if being circumcised on the eighth day, and being in all other respects a Jew, according to the Law, is the *flesh*, that is, the Body of CHRIST, what can we suppose to be the Blood of Christ, but the Spirit or Life of the Law; precisely as I have defined it?

St. Paul refers to his having persecuted the Church, as among the *virtues* of the *letter:* and doubtless he came to see in this, that the letter killeth, it having

plunged him into crime; while yet the true spirit of the letter freed him from that crime, for which he obtained "pardon," as he says, because he "did it ignorantly in unbelief," 1 Tim. i. 13.

St. Peter, in his second Epistle, iii. 16, refers to St. Paul's Epistles as containing "some things hard to be understood;" but, admitting this, we are only required to be so much the more on our guard, against interpretations in violation of "sense and reason." If we cannot extract the sense by honest study, how can we hope to find it by abandoning ourselves to a blind faith? And, in what, or in whom shall we have faith? In the Epistles, without understanding them? This would be very absurd. Shall we then receive the interpretation of others? But who does not see that this submission is not to God, but to man; and that we must be exposed to the hazard of falling under the direction of a blind guide, with the chance, if not the certainty, of falling into the ditch. Matt. xv. 14.

This may be a suitable place for explaining the sense of St. Paul in the warning he gives the *Colossians*—Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the *traditions of men*, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, Col. ii. 8. St. Paul, we should remember, had been seduced into a persecution of the Church by a blind zeal for the *Letter* and the "traditions of men," and this we must regard as the key to this warning, this supposed warning against philosophy. We pay St. Paul a very poor

compliment by supposing, as many suppose, that he aimed a blow, in this and other similar passages, against philosophy or the light of reason. He would have denied indeed the validity of a pretended or *vain* philosophy which should deny the Spirit of Truth as it had been revealed in himself, and which he had preached so clearly that it was known to others by the same seal of certainty, as that by which it was known to himself; that is, it was known to others with such self-evidence that they received it, not as the word of men (that is, not as a tradition, nor even as his word), but as it is in truth, the word of God, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Here the word of God means Christ, as used in Colos. ii. 8, where it means the Truth, independently of the "traditions of men."

What St. Paul meant by philosophy and vain deceit, is very plainly seen in his 1st Epistle to Timothy, chapter i., where he says: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith;" and then we read:

5. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith [sincerity ?] unfeigned:

6. From which some, having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7. Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

8. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

9. Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient.

St. Paul knew very well that the true genealogy of Christ was not to be traced through a physical line of descent from David, or from Abraham, although two of the gospels are disfigured by genealogies.* The true descendants of Abraham are those who inherit his faith; not those of his blood. Hence, we see what St. Paul deprecated, as "vain jangling:" it was not philosophy, but verbal disputings about *traditions*, or, in one word, about the *Letter*. He again and again refers to the same thing. He warns Titus, chapter iii. 9, to avoid foolish questions, and *genealogies*, and contentions, and *strivings about the law;* "for they are unprofitable and vain." Here is no warfare against philosophy, but a strong protest against being entangled in useless questions about traditions, and what, in chapter i., verse 14, in this same Epistle to Titus, he calls "Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." But to return—

Christ was to St. Paul a Spirit; and that Spirit was the subject of his preaching, and the object of his life. He preached CHRIST crucified; that is, the *Spirit* which the *Letter* "killeth"; for the whole purpose of his preaching seems to be to bring out the Spirit, as

* Many critics have supposed that the genealogical lists in Matthew and Luke did not originally belong to those gospels, but were added by some Jewish convert.

supreme over the Letter. So, he tells the Corinthians, in his first Epistle, ii. 2, that he determined to know nothing among them save JESUS CHRIST and him crucified; that is, the *Spirit* which the *Letter* had crucified.

The Epistles of St. Paul, though they contain much doctrinal matter, must be considered, on the whole, as expository, and they are themselves open to much discussion,—written, as they were, at different times and places, and under varying circumstances; now under strong and earnest convictions, and then, in another mood, he utters mildly the modest language: "I think I have the Spirit." At one time, in a lofty reliance upon his convictions, he thinks himself "not a whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles," 2 Cor. xi. 5; at another, in a profound and beautiful humility, he declares himself "the least of the Apostles," and "not meet to be called an Apostle," because he had persecuted the Church of God, 1 Cor. xv. 9.

These Epistles, therefore, cannot be interpreted from any one point of view. Sometimes St. Paul refers to CHRIST as purely a *Spirit*, and speaks of his living by that *Spirit*. "I live," says he, "yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." He also temporized, making himself all things to all men, in order, as he says, to gain some to God. He uses even this language, howsoever it is to be explained, Rom. iii. 7, "If the truth of GOD hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"

St. Paul, I say, could be all things to all men—in

order that he might, by all means, save some. He could accommodate himself to the Jews, to save the Jews; to them that were under the law, that he might gain them that were under the law; to them that were without law, that he might gain them that are without law; to the weak he became weak (letting them, no doubt, retain their superstitions), that he might gain the weak (1 Cor. ix. 20, 22). He writes to the Romans: "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh," Rom. vi. 19. To the Corinthians he writes: "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, *neither yet now are ye able*," 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. He charges the Corinthians to give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Son of God; "even," says he, "as I please all men in all things," giving, as his reason for this temporizing course towards "all men," that "they might be saved." But he gives the *Corinthians* a warning which seems to be overlooked by all modern inquirers into the gospel. He accuses them of being yet carnal, and gives, as a sign of it: "For while one saith, I am of *Paul;* and another, I am of *Apollos;* are ye not carnal?" exclaiming: "who is *Paul*, but a minister?" &c.

Now, if *St. Paul* could be all things to all men, even for a pious purpose, we must not suppose that his Epistles can be explained from any one stand-point.

If he could allow babes to have milk, must not some evidences, or signs of this be expected in his Epistles,—making it in the highest degree obligatory on us to keep in mind his own caution, not to lean too much upon the literal sense of those Epistles? Most certainly, it is the neglect of this caution by most controversialists, that has made St. Paul's Letters a theological battle-field, for whole centuries past; and they will continue to furnish materials for controversy so long as we refuse to profit by his own declaration, that the Letter killeth. St. Paul evidently used language discursively, allegorically, metaphorically; not confining himself to the use of words in a strict sense, but taking the widest range of an eloquent advocate; and it is the greatest possible absurdity to build up an important doctrine upon isolated texts drawn from his epistles. He speaks of CHRIST in so many ways that his authority may be advanced for almost any doctrine whatever. CHRIST is a person; then he is a Spirit:—he is the Church, the head of the church; and his Body is the Body of the Church, or the Church is the Body of CHRIST, &c., accommodating his language, no doubt, to the persons he addressed, and the purpose he had in view.

If we put aside inherited opinions, and read the Epistles of St. Paul for the purpose of learning his opinion of CHRIST, as a miraculously endowed being or person, we can hardly fail to be surprised at the absence of distinct allusions to those miracles so specifically and circumstantially narrated as facts in the gospels. We might at least expect to meet with a distinct

reference to the astounding miracle of the raising of Lazarus, if it was a historical fact; but St. Paul says nothing of it, and it is remarkable that this most wonderful event is related but by one of the gospel writers. St. Paul speaks, indeed, of "signs and wonders," done by "the power of the Spirit of GOD," Rom. xv. 18, 19; as if done by himself; and in the same connection it is implied that such signs and wonders had been wrought by others; but he does not particularize them. He says nothing of them to mark them as physical wonders, or miracles, and we may conclude that he referred only to spiritual wonders, wrought in himself or in others. He declares expressly that he will not appeal to the works done by others lest he should build upon "another man's foundation" Rom. xv. 20. He evidently desired to refer only to his own experience of the truth; for in his own experience he felt that he could not be mistaken; and these internal works of the Spirit of truth in himself were, to St. Paul, the evidence of the truth of the doctrines he preached. In other words, the truth was not certified to him by external miracles, but by an internal experience. He saw the truth he preached within himself, and this he called inspiration, or the revelation of CHRIST, in himself; and yet, not so as to imply a supernatural cause, but simply to distinguish this source of knowledge from what in modern times we call hearsay knowledge.

In this same spirit he writes to the Galatians (i. 15–17), that he did not receive his gospel from the teachings of man, and takes care to set forth that he was

not indebted for it to the Apostles, but had discovered the truth in himself. This only shows that the truth may be apprehended within the soul independently of man, and is then above the authority of mere human teaching to the individual so receiving it.

CHRIST is rarely referred to by St. Paul as a person: he is generally designated by his office, or as the crucified one, but without an appeal to those specific miracles related in the gospels. St. Paul preached CHRIST crucified, as a doctrine; meaning no more, as I understand him, than that he wished to bring to life within his hearers that Spirit of Truth which the Letter had killed in the Jewish church. It was this spirit of truth that he desired might be "formed" in those he addressed, Gal. iv. 19, and that Spirit he called CHRIST. He often calls his doctrine a mystery. The real mystery was the doctrine of the Spirit, and not that of a person. A person had indeed preached the doctrine in so eminent a manner as to be called the Lord, the Lord of glory, and even the Son of GOD, as many others had been called Lords and even Gods in the Scriptures, without implying necessarily an elevation or distinction above humanity.

In addressing the Romans, ch. xv. 8, St. Paul refers directly to CHRIST as a person, but in a purely natural manner. He assures the Romans that JESUS CHRIST was a "minister of the [Jewish] circumcision;" as if he had been a minister to the Jews only; and he defines this office more distinctly by claiming, as belonging to himself, the office of "minister of JESUS CHRIST,"

that is, of the Spirit, as he calls it, 2 Cor. iii. 6, to the Gentiles. He had previously declared, Rom. iii. 29, that GOD is not the GOD of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. Hence he so often speaks of *his* gospel; as if CHRIST (as a person) had preached to the Jews only, his own gospel being however the same truth, the same spirit of the letter, which Jesus, the "minister of the circumcision," had preached to the Jews, St. Paul only extending it to the Gentiles.

This doctrine of the Spirit he called *meat*, as being a doctrine not easily apprehended; and this he explained to those who were strong enough to "bear" it: but the doctrine of a person, as addressing itself to the imagination, and as being easily apprehended, he called *milk;* and this he gave to the weak, whom he called "babes in CHRIST." This very same distinction has reached our own time, and will continue to manifest itself in the world.

The point I desire to present at this stage of my inquiry is, chiefly, that St. Paul, as a missionary or minister to the Gentiles, does not appear to have preached *a book*, nor did he preach with a book in hand as authority for *his* gospel, but he preached the Spirit, or the Spirit of Truth, and this he desired the Gentiles to see for themselves, as he had seen it for himself; and they were not only not to lean upon or depend upon "the traditions of men," but St. Paul expressly rebukes the Corinthians for making his own a party name. 1 Cor. iii. 4.

St. Paul often speaks of the resurrection of CHRIST;

but he had no personal knowledge of that event; and this is the reason why he so frequently refers to it argumentatively. He certainly believed in the resurrection; but he believed also in the second coming of CHRIST, as a physical apparition in the heavens, to be signalized by a "shout;" and this was to take place, according to his belief, within the generation in which he lived. This sufficiently demonstrates his facility of belief in the supernatural, and must considerably diminish the weight of his opinions upon such subjects. He had no personal knowledge, I repeat, of the resurrection; and where he seems to speak most positively of the resurrection of CHRIST, and of his having been seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, then of about five hundred,—of which fact, by the way, we have not even one personal witness, much less five hundred witnesses,—then of James (who says nothing of it in his Epistle), then of all of the apostles,—as if there were other than the "twelve" just mentioned,—he adds—and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time (1 Cor. xv. 5–7). From this statement we are at liberty to consider that Cephas, and the others referred to by St. Paul, saw CHRIST in the same manner as St. Paul himself had seen him; and certainly we may understand that CHRIST was not seen by St. Paul as a person, but as a spirit.

If this view be thought to make the death of CHRIST of no effect, then, certainly, I must say that, as a person, his death is no more to us than the death of thousands who have perished in his name, every one of

whom may have given testimony to the power of the Spirit of CHRIST in the soul. The resurrection of CHRIST means, therefore, the resurrection of the Spirit of TRUTH, which is eternal, and cannot die—and we appropriate it by living to it; yet not to a person, much less to the person of one whose mortality is, in some sense, an accredited fact, in the universal belief of Christendom.

That St. Paul does not refer specifically to the miracles, as recorded in the gospels, must go very far towards convincing us, as in the cases of Philo and Josephus, that he either never heard of them or did not believe them. Writing, as a Pharisee, more openly than the four evangelists, he had less need of a resort to symbolism, though he also has used a veil to some extent. The gospel writers, however, wrote altogether in symbols and figures. Each gospel is a grand parable, and each writer uses such figures and such parables within the parable, and miracles *as* parables, as might best express his idea of the action or office of the Spirit of Truth. This is the reason why so few of the miracles are recorded by every writer, and why each gospel contains some things omitted from the others. This diversity cannot be explained by supposing that each historian only recorded what he personally knew, and that they supply each other's omissions; for, from the nature of the facts, and the nature of the inspired knowledge claimed for the writers, they must each have

known the whole history, and they were bound to record it, if they regarded it as real.

In reading St. Paul's Epistles, I am struck with one reflection which we, in this age of freedom from oppressive ceremonies, ought to make. St. Paul saw no small portion of the value of his freedom (in the Spirit) in the relief it gave him from the burdensome ceremonies of the Jewish Law. The whole of this Law was typical, and expressed a truth indeed; but to see the Law as the Truth itself was a bondage. The sacrifice, for example, of certain animals, was typical of the sacrifice of bad passions. To see this only as a ceremony, was to lose both the beauty and the benefit of it; but to see the truth in the type was both to realize the benefit, and be free from the bondage of the external law at the same time. This, in view of the whole law, which was very complicated, was a matter of immense importance. But in our age, in some countries, there is no such oppressive external law, from which man cries for relief.

In our time, on the contrary, in some portions of Christendom, the preaching of the Word, that is, the Truth of GOD, is free; and we see the Spirit of the Word manifesting itself through preachers of all denominations: toleration being a sign of the Spirit, while intolerance is a sure mark of its absence. To feel the truth is, necessarily, to feel a wish that others might share it; but it excludes the disposition to use violence upon the faith of others. True faith speaks in the language

of St. Paul to Philemon—"Without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly." We ought not to forget that St. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for forming a party around his name. This only means that the truth lives in itself, and should not be preached as resting upon authority. It is its own authority, and it is the authority or the test of whatever is said in its name.

To appeal to St. Paul or to St. John or to Apollos, as ultimate authority for a doctrine of Truth, is somewhat similar to an appeal to Euclid as authority for the truth of a mathematical proposition, and fail to see the truth of the proposition itself. I refer here to a doctrine of Truth, and not to a mere verity of history. A doctrine may be true, but when received only upon authority, it is not known to be so; and those who receive it upon authority alone, have no principle by which to distinguish truth from error, or even important truth from that which is comparatively unimportant; that is, doctrine from mere history; for history, when not sifted and adjusted by doctrine itself, is comparatively unimportant.

To perceive the truth of a doctrine, as it is in itself, is to perceive the Spirit, the CHRIST of the doctrine. To realize the Truth, as it is in the Scriptures, the Spirit of the Scriptures, is to have CHRIST revealed in one's self; for CHRIST is the Spirit, the Truth of a scriptural doctrine, not as it is written, or because it is written, but as it is in itself; and this means truth, as it is in GOD, so far as we can have any conception of Truth as

it is in GOD. St. Paul could have had no other meaning than this when he thanked GOD that the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 13) had received the truth, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of GOD;" for the word of GOD is the truth of GOD, and this is the truth as it is in itself.

By the above reference to Euclid, I do not mean to compare the value of geometric truth to that of moral and spiritual truth. I only say that, as mere truth, it is the same thing to sustain it by authority in the one case as in the other.

If it be said that there are some truths which we cannot know without a revelation in a supernatural sense, then I say, that such a statement merely affirms our finite state, and our proper course is to acknowledge our weakness, and not assume to know what, for wise purposes, may be hidden from us; and then we may comfort ourselves with the reasonable reflection that truths beyond our reach cannot be essential to us. A little further reflection may show us that revelation itself, in an oral or written form, can, in no intelligible sense, be said to teach us any such truth. We may then have sufficient reason for believing that those who assume to know any such truth must be under a delusion. To confide in an assumed revelation, not intelligible to us, involves a principle which would make us follow any superstition in any country in which we might happen to be born or live.

SECTION V.

I DO not find in St. Paul's Epistles any distinct or orderly statement of what he calls his ["my"] gospel (Rom. ii. 16). He speaks of it as a "mystery which had been kept secret since the world began" (Rom. xvi. 25). He calls it "a mystery made known to him by revelation" (Ephes. iii. 3); that is, he had not received it orally from man, nor did he receive it upon the authority of any man, or any set of men (Gal. i. 11, 12). He declares that, in other ages, "it was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed (he adds) unto his holy Apostles and Prophets *by the Spirit;* [in order] that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in CHRIST by the gospel," &c. (Ephes. iii. 5, 6, 7). In verse 8, he refers to "the unsearchable riches of CHRIST," without doubt meaning, by CHRIST, the Spirit; wherein, also, lay the mystery, which had been hid from the sons of men. He calls CHRIST the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD (1 Cor. i. 24); and this he refers to, no doubt, in the second chapter (1 Cor.), as something that he had previously preached, —but he does not explain it. He had preached the

doctrine of "wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak (he continues) the wisdom of GOD in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which GOD ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8).

Now this *mystery*, we must suppose, was what he called his gospel; and yet St. Paul has not written a gospel.

The simple truth appears to be, but I say it with reverence, that St. Paul saw a certain doctrine or truth, which he called CHRIST, not as referring to a person, except in so far as he gave to the doctrine the name of the person who, like himself, had preached it. JESUS CHRIST, as a person, had preached a doctrine to the Jews, to which St. Paul, as a self-constituted minister to the Gentiles, gave a wider circulation; and this doctrine or Truth he sometimes refers to as a mystery, sometimes as the Spirit, and finally gives to it the name of him who had pre-eminently preached it among the Jews, though he called it his own gospel, also, because he saw the truth of it in himself. CHRIST, as this Spirit, and not as a person, he calls the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD; and those who believe in the power and wisdom of GOD do really believe in the CHRIST preached by St. Paul; only this should not be a mere nominal belief, but a vital reality expressed in the life.

In his epistles, as I insist, St. Paul seems to refer to some doctrine, that he had verbally explained; but he does not definitively recite it in the epistles themselves. He invokes a heavy curse upon any one, even *himself*, or an *angel*, who should preach any other doctrine than that which he had (previously) preached (Gal. i. 8); but he writes as if those he addressed already knew to what he referred; and, therefore, does not specifically state the doctrine. This allusion to his doctrine occurs at the opening of the Epistle, and, of course, here, as elsewhere, refers to a doctrine previously explained. In Romans x. 8, he no doubt refers to the same doctrine—his gospel—but calls it the "faith" he preached.

In this Epistle (to the Romans), chapter x., verses 4 to 8, I shall presently point out a clew to the doctrine, and will show it to be the mystery of CHRIST, as the Spirit of the Letter of the Old Testament. This doctrine he preached as wisdom among the perfect; but others he fed with milk only, not meat (1 Cor. iii. 2).

Where, as in 2 Cor. iv. 3, St. Paul speaks of his gospel as being hid only to those who are lost, we may suppose that he referred to his doctrine as he had preached and explained it verbally, and not to what we find written in his epistles: or, we may assume that his doctrine is accessible to all men of open hearts before God, but hid from all others.

We should not forget or be afraid to look the fact in the face, that whatever inspiration St. Paul had, it did not protect him from one most decided error, in

sharing what appears to have been a common opinion among his brethren. In seeking the truth, we must not shut our eyes against any unwelcome fact. St. Paul, with some of the apostles, certainly looked for the end of the world as being near at hand; and contemplated it, not in the death of an individual, but in the imagined "end" of all things; and this, too, he preached as a mystery: Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). In the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 4, we read: For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in CHRIST shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

And this was urged in order that the holy *brethren* —as they are called in chapter v. 27—might comfort one another with these words—chapter iv. 18. The plain import of this is not to be explained away by alleging that it is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled. It expresses the belief of St. Paul, that the end of the world was at hand, and that his generation should not pass before the destruction of the world should be accomplished,—as set forth in Matt. xxiv. 34. We may well

attribute to this opinion some portion of the almost preternatural excitement under which St. Paul appears to have written, assisting him to the strong views he everywhere expresses of the nothingness of this world and of the things of time. He no doubt thought that his preaching to the Gentiles was a necessary preparative to the coming of CHRIST from Heaven with a shout, and we gain nothing by closing our eyes to the real state of the case. We ought to acknowledge, that in this particular instance St. Paul was mistaken. We should be ready to consider the truth as something above us, over which we have no power, while yet we may raise ourselves to it by accepting it without reserve. Whatsoever is true, it is important for us to know, in order that we may rest upon it. We cannot stand out against it; and it is best it should be so: for it is only upon this condition that the truth can make us free (John viii. 32). A variable or changeable truth, or one which could be forced into an accommodation to our specialities or limitations, could afford us no recourse against error, and no point of reliance or hope in cases of doubt and difficulty: and if we cannot go before the "Judge of all the world" in this doctrine, strictly adhered to, I see no other doctrine more likely to be acceptable to a GOD of truth, and least of all do I see how we are to benefit ourselves by an attempt to compromise the truth, by which we can only darken the sun within ourselves.

I have said that I do not find any specific statement

in St. Paul's Epistles, of the doctrine which he repeatedly refers to as *his* gospel, calling it a mystery which had been hid from the sons of men from the beginning of the world. We are too apt to imagine that we have this *mystery* fully explained in the written gospels contained in the recognized canon, without considering that, according to the received chronology, the Epistles of St. Paul were written before the four gospels in the canon. St. Paul, in what he says of *his* gospel, did not refer to either of the four gospels in our possession, as they were not before him when he wrote. His gospel, I repeat, is an unexplained "mystery." His epistles, it is true, are full of earnest exhortations to a righteous life; which is all well and very admirable: but there is no mystery in it. He refers repeatedly to his teaching in such a manner as to lead his reader to suppose that he had orally explained something of which we find no clear statement in his epistles.

We may explain this by considering that, although St. Paul was a Pharisee, or had been one, and had seen the truth for himself, which he called inspiration for that reason—since he did not receive it from his fellow-man—still, he might have been subsequently initiated into the Essene society of Brethren, and thus have fallen under the restrictions of the members of that society, who were sworn not to speak openly of their secret. This would explain his mystical allusions to the *flesh*, or CHRIST in the flesh, and would explain many other portions of his epistles; such as his allusions to those who were "without," that is, the non-initiated, and his

warnings to beware of *dogs*, the uninitiated again, to whom the children's bread was not to be given. Where he claims to have declared the whole council of GOD, we must suppose him to refer to the whole of his teaching, oral, as well as written, for his epistles alone cannot be said to contain the whole council of GOD.

That St. Paul has referred to *his* gospel as a mystery is certain, and that he has not explained it openly in his Epistles is equally certain. He tells us that he spoke (of it) privately in Jerusalem "to them which were of reputation," lest by any means he should "run in vain" (Gal. ii. 2): and we can hardly suppose that he has written openly in his epistles that which he found it expedient to speak of privately to men of reputation in Jerusalem. It is important to weigh these considerations well, because of the variety of ways in which St. Paul refers to *his* mystery. Possibly his calling himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews, in his Epistle to the Philippians, iii. 5, if we knew who the Hebrews were, might lead to some explanation of his position towards his mystery and towards that class of Jews: for the *Hebrews*, technically understood, were not the *nation* or the whole people of the Jews, as is very plain by the whole tenor of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Many scholars are decidedly of the opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by St. Paul. Who were those Hebrews among the Jews? Were they a separate society, having a high-priest of their own, and if so, who was he? Could the real historical Jesus have been a high-priest of the Hebrews? These are important

questions, in view of the first verses of the third chapter. But I do not propose to examine these questions, and have only alluded to them in connection with my reference to the doctrine of St. Paul, because in this epistle also the allusion to CHRIST JESUS is in like manner mysterious, and very far from being an open, plain statement. Why was this? We shall never understand it by regarding the sacred histories of Moses and CHRIST from a merely literal point of view. Moses is the Law, of which CHRIST is the Spirit; and both are illustrated in the life of man; and perhaps, with open eyes, we may see them both before us at this day as plainly as St. Paul saw his mystery, which he said was hid only from those that were lost (2 Cor. iv. 3).

It was not my intention to devote so much space to St. Paul and his epistles, but I must still further add a few words to express my conviction that a careful reader of the epistles, apart from the traditions recorded in the Acts, will hardly discover any valid ground for the opinion generally entertained in the Christian world, that their author was either endowed with supernatural powers, or supernaturally inspired. I find no sufficient evidence of the universally received opinion on these points. I see no signs of his having wrought external miracles. All that St. Paul says of "signs and wonders" may, without the least violence of interpretation, be understood as referring to spiritual signs and wonders, such as are not so very unusual even in our own day, and are exhibited everywhere on the pages

of the history of man. In regard to his claim to inspiration, I see no reason for supposing that this was set up as exceptional or peculiar in a supernatural sense. On the contrary, St. Paul evidently called upon those he addressed to accept the truth for its own sake, and as seeing it for themselves, as he had done (1 Thes. ii. 13). He calls it inspiration only to distinguish it from knowledge obtained by tradition or accepted upon authority, both of which, as sources of spiritual knowledge, St. Paul certainly repudiated; and if we follow his example, we shall do the same, and not substitute St. Paul's name for that of CHRIST, or the name of CHRIST for that of Moses, but see religion in all of them, and yet independently of them all; for true religion is "the gift of GOD," and not of man (John v. 10).

St. Paul's language in regard to Jesus is undoubtedly obscure and indefinite. Let it be admitted that he refers sometimes to a person, and that he applies lofty titles to him, as the Lord, the Lord of glory, &c.: this may be easily referred to the oriental style of speaking of highly spiritually endowed persons, as we see in the Scriptures throughout, without necessarily supposing the supernatural. The plainest allusion to Jesus as a person is in the Epistle to the Romans, where he is called simply a "minister of the circumcision." Where St. Paul's language may seem to call for the supposition of a higher character, we are at liberty to adjust it to the very explicit references to CHRIST as the Spirit, the Spirit of GOD, &c., language

wholly inapplicable to a person. Even the writers of the gospels make Jesus explain or excuse himself to the Jews for calling himself the Son of GOD, by referring to the custom of their fathers, who had called those gods to whom the word of GOD came (John x. 35, 36). To my reading, St. Paul was a purely natural man, of great earnestness of character and high enthusiasm, with the most lofty conceptions of the truth with which, in a human sense, he was inspired. I hold to this view, not only because I really recognize his character as here described, but because, from this stand-point, I can study his writings and sympathize with the man; whereas, on the supposition of a supernaturally endowed being, St. Paul would be lost to me. He would become a nondescript, and in some sense even a *lusus naturæ*.

To suppose that any man has or ever had a supernatural source of knowledge inaccessible to other men, is to place us entirely at his mercy. It is to make an idol of fallible man. To bow to such a man is to transfer to the finite the awe which is due only to the Infinite. By such an act of humility we abdicate our own proper nature, deny its divine instincts and intuitions, and make spiritual freedom impossible; and to one in this state, the admonition of CHRIST must be a dead letter—GOD is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth. But we are not called upon to attribute even this simple but sublime declaration of the true nature of worship, to a supernatural source. We should seek that in ourselves

which is a true response to it. The nature of man is truly equal to this. If it were not so, the declaration itself would be of no importance to us. It would be unintelligible and wholly inapplicable to us. It could neither instruct us, nor lay us under obligations of any sort.

I accept St. Paul's Epistles with thankfulness, but am not anxiously concerned to interpret and harmonize them. I have referred to his doctrine of the Spirit, not as if he were the author of that doctrine, much less as an authority for it. The doctrine is declared in John vi. 63: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth"—that is, that giveth life—"the flesh profiteth nothing." This is substantially the doctrine of St. Paul. In the gospel it is expressed in symbolism; but St. Paul professes to have used "great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. iii. 12), and expressed openly what he meant, at least in this passage. This difference between the mode of writing in the gospels, compared to the style of St. Paul's Epistles, may be seen generally throughout. The gospel writers, using pure symbolism, become impersonal to us. We do not see them as persons. They stand, as it were, behind a screen, almost impenetrable. We cannot distinguish their individualities, except that John shows a more speculative turn of mind than either of the others. They belonged to a secret society; a society, with a secret which the members were sworn not to cast before swine, and not to give to the dogs. Here is the true ground of the symbolic character of the four gospels.

Not so, or not so much, with St. Paul. He was not an Essene, but a convert from the Pharisees (Acts xxvi. 5). He is a real person of flesh and blood, and his life is, perhaps, more instructive than his doctrine. We see him in his discovery of the Truth, the Spirit under the Letter. This was his conversion. Then we see him as a progressive preacher of the Truth. Leaving CHRIST in the flesh [i. e. in the Law] behind (2 Cor. v. 16), he feels called upon to press toward the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, [in the spirit] forgetting those things that were behind (Phil. iii. 13, 14); and, at last, if he was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we see him even—"Leaving the principles of the doctrine of CHRIST, let us go on," says he; "not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward GOD, of the doctrine of baptisms, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Hebrews vi. 1, 2;) as if there was a point of view on this subject, which refuses alliance with all sensuous representations whatsoever; and so there is; as every deep-feeling soul knows, who has learned to regard a future necessary fact, as already in the past. Such a soul having passed over to the other side (John vi. 25), is in a right condition for singling out the wheat from the chaff of words, and giving the latter to the winds.

The Acts of the Apostles seem hardly to have been rightly named. There is very little said of the apostles themselves, but a great deal of St. Paul, who was not an apostle, or was not one of the Twelve. There is some appearance of symbolism in this work, but

more still of a confused detail of traditions not supported by collateral evidence. The account of St. Paul's conversion can hardly be said to derive any countenance from his own Epistles, which are remarkably silent in regard, not only to physical miracles in his own life, but in respect to those reported of CHRIST himself. The conversion of St. Paul was, no doubt, an example of what the moderns call a subjective experience. From this point of view, its reality is unquestionable.

The Apocalypse waits yet for an explanation. Many have labored in vain to discover some meaning in it, or to devise some for it, which the soul might receive without denying its reason and its intuitions; but unless M. Dupuis has explained it, I know of no writer who has done so. Dupuis regards it as the work of a mystagogue, of some ancient school of Sabæism, under a veil of mystery. There is a remarkable reference to the Apocalypse in the concluding portion of Dr. Oliver's History of Initiations, which nearly determines it to be the product of some ancient secret society,—the work of some one familiar with the Eleusinian mysteries, whose "machinery" is said to be used. Dupuis has labored very ingeniously upon it, and if he has not explained it, our successors have yet to work upon it until their brains are tired, and they may pass it on to a later posterity to exercise its ingenuity upon. Swedenborg has written some five volumes on the Apoca-

lypse, but his explanations satisfy only those who look upon their author as an inspired writer. It may mean a great deal; but until its sense becomes manifest, it is virtually without sense, that is, for us. If we do not know what it means, how can we assume that it has a meaning at all; and, still more, on what ground can we affirm that it has a divine meaning? To know nothing of the sense of a book may be a good reason for saying nothing about it, but it is no reason at all for asserting that it incloses not only an important but a divine sense. A doctrine of Truth ought to have a better foundation than a book whose name has become a synonym for all that is dark and incomprehensible.

The assembly of Bishops at the Council of Laodicea in 364 omitted the Revelation from the Canon. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, A. D. 340, omits it from his list of canonical books, and Gregory of Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantinople, A. D. 375, as also Philostratus, A. D. 380, do the same. The Council of Nice received it into the Canon about A. D. 325,—though by what strength of vote (!) is unknown. I know that many are of the opinion that a revelation from God must necessarily be obscure; but I see no reason for this. What is called a profound truth, in such knowledge as is accessible to man, may be obscure to those to whom it is revealed by man; but a truth revealed, or put into light by God, must be the most luminous of all truths. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; and, by consequence, what he makes known must be known in the clearest manner. We can only think

otherwise by mistaking obscure truths, or possibly falsehoods for revelations in a supernatural sense. That which is dark and obscure to us, may be so because it is *not* revealed; but whatsoever is revealed by God himself, must surely be in light. This is so certain that whatever we do clearly and certainly know may be considered God's revelation of truth in us.

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SECTION VI.

THE writers of the gospels, as I have already intimated, appear to have been Jews, writing for their own people. This, at all events, must be said of Matthew, if we may judge by his commands to the disciples whom he sent forth to teach, saying: Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. x. 5, 6). Nothing can be more express or direct than these commands; yet, in chapter xxviii., the disciples are commanded, it is true, to "teach all nations;" and Mark commands them to go into all the world, and preach the gospel (which means Truth) to every creature. If we take these latter commands strictly, there may seem to be a contradiction between them and the prior command in Matthew; but if we interpret the expressions "all nations" and "all the world," by the evident limitation with which this latter expression is used by Luke (ii. 1), referring to the decree of Cæsar, that *all the world* should be taxed, meaning, of course, the Roman world, —then, the command to preach the gospel to all the world may mean only the Jewish world. I suppose

this to be the true interpretation, and I look upon the gospel writers as Jews writing for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the followers of the dead letter.

The first indication we meet with that the Gentiles might be called to the truth, or have the truth preached to them, is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, where Peter is said to have had a call from the Spirit to preach to certain Gentiles. The preaching by Peter, in this case, did not proceed from the teaching of a person (Acts x. 19, and xi. 12); and when it became known to the apostles in Jerusalem, it was evidently treated as something new, upon which there was much "disputing" (Acts xv. 7), resulting in a formal decision, which was communicated to certain Gentiles by "letters," excusing Gentile converts from the necessity of keeping the law, meaning, of course, the ceremonial law. There seems to have been no little uncertainty upon this question prior to the appearance of the converted Pharisee, St. Paul, whose force of character and earnestness overleapt the evident sectarian or national narrowness of the apostles themselves, who, as Essenes, were the interpreters of the Hebrew sacred books exclusively for Jews,—the Jews of their own society. In chapters x. to xv. of the Acts of the Apostles we may see very plainly how "those of the circumcision" were "astonished" when they heard that the Holy Ghost had been manifested among the Gentiles. In these chapters we see the incipient steps taken to carry the word of GOD, that is, the word of Truth, beyond the seed of Abraham; and it is evident that so wide a

preaching of the gospel had not entered into the idea of those by whom we must suppose the gospels were written—who were of the secret sect of the Essenes.

Although Peter was apparently surprised into a declaration of the Truth to some few of the Gentiles, it was nevertheless Paul who looked decidedly beyond the Jewish people and saw the great principle, that the Truth is universal. Through this noble conception he became the Apostle to the Gentiles, and this, too, in despite of the opposition he met at Jerusalem (Acts xiii. 46), and he ultimately manifested a disposition to lay aside altogether "CHRIST in the Flesh;" that is, the entire paraphernalia of the Jewish ceremonial Law;—for this was the flesh of CHRIST to which he referred.

The gospels, then, as I consider, were designed originally as interpretations of the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures, after a mystical method, for the use or edification of a Secret Society among the Jews. I look upon them as Jewish books, though written from a higher point of view than most of the books of the Old Testament; and I see nothing in them that contemplated the preaching of Truth to the Gentiles. In the language of St. Paul, I regard JESUS CHRIST as "a minister of the circumcision;" that is, a minister to the Jews only (Rom. xv. 8).

In the converted Pharisee, St. Paul, however, I see a great soul that looked beyond the Jewish people; one who looked upon all the nations of the earth as of "one blood" (Acts xvii. 26); one who deeply felt that

the Truth of GOD was not a merely Jewish Truth, or a Truth for Jews only.

Notwithstanding this, it is necessary, in order to apprehend clearly the office, or the teaching of CHRIST, not only to recognize him in his representative character as personating the Hebrew Scriptures, but in a wider sense still; and we must consider that, while the Essenes were Jews, and sought the Spirit, that is CHRIST, in the Jewish sacred books, they were, at the same time, a profoundly spiritual class of "Holy" men, as stated by Philo, and some of them must be supposed to have attained a view of Truth in a higher than a merely Jewish sense. In the main, indeed, this Truth might have been seen in or through the older Jewish Scriptures; yet, in its own nature, TRUTH transcends those older records. Hence, while CHRIST represents the Truth of the Jewish sacred writings, he is made to represent a higher order of TRUTH at the same time. Thus, he decides that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; and he revises or reverses some features of the older Law; doing away with the doctrine, for example, requiring an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,—which shows an advance in civilization and humanity, and thus proves that the older Scriptures did not express utimate TRUTH, but a Truth accommodated to the times and to the people among whom it originated.

This view explains the remarkable declaration of CHRIST in the 6th chapter of John—that the "manna" (which means the doctrine) given to the children of

Israel by Moses was not "bread" from Heaven (verse 32). To eat of the manna, or bread, which Moses had given, did not satisfy the hunger (for truth); and here we have the same truth that is expressed in the 4th chapter, verse 13, where it is said that the water of Jacob's well did not quench the thirst (for truth). In both of these declarations we may clearly recognize the teaching of a reformer,—one who saw that Life does not depend upon ceremonies.

Not only is the TRUTH exhibited in a higher form in CHRIST, than in the older Law, but he is represented as promising a still farther advance, where he says (John iv. 12): Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.

To believe on CHRIST means, in the first place, to believe in the Hebrew Scriptures, which he represented; and next, in the TRUTH itself, the SON OF GOD, which transcends the written Scriptures, not only as they were before the gospels were written, but after they were written also.

We have no adequate idea of TRUTH, when we imagine it can be exhausted and limited by any writings whatever. It is the measure of all that is written about it, and cannot itself be written. It judgeth all things, but is itself "judged of no man." Hence, in the interpretation of the gospels, from what has been said above, we shall meet with some exhibitions, referring more immediately to the old Jewish records, which must be understood by means of those records;

but we shall find some, again, that can only be interpreted by the higher Spirit—the SPIRIT OF TRUTH itself.

Thus, the *Pool* of Bethesda with *five* porches (John v. 2), refers to the Old Testament, as many have seen; the *Pool* symbolizing Truth (said to be in a well), to which the five books of Moses, as so many porches, were supposed to lead.

The allusion is also to the five books of Moses, in the story of the woman at Jacob's well (John iv.) who had had *five* husbands, but who was then living with one not her husband. The Church is often represented in the Scriptures by a woman. Thus, in the story of the marriage at Cana, of Galilee, according to the interpretation of St. Augustine, the "mother" of JESUS is the CHURCH, who signifies to her SON the want of the Spirit, which she waits for the power of, &c. In this sense the Church, which is a fruit of the Spirit, is no less the MOTHER of it; and so, the Church is mystically "the daughter, mother and bride of the self-same LORD." At Jacob's well the Church is exhibited as having wandered from the five sacred books of the Law; yet this is made the occasion of declaring the sublimest doctrines of the Spirit, called "living water" (verse 10). GOD is declared to be a SPIRIT (verse 24), and the doctrine is set forth, that they that worship *him* must worship *him* in Spirit and in Truth; and as this is the highest TRUTH, its representative is made to say, in answer to the woman's query about the coming of the Messias: I that speak unto thee, am *he*

(verse 26). This language expresses the conviction of a Soul, that its realized Truth is the TRUTH OF GOD—that is, the SON OF GOD, the true Messias—whose salvation, according to the prophet Isaiah, "is from generation to generation" (Is. li. 8); for man is saved by the Truth, and no otherwise, as he is also condemned by the Truth, and no otherwise. Hence CHRIST, the TRUTH, is declared to be the judge of the world; for it is the office of TRUTH to judge the world.

As an instance where the interpretation does not immediately grow out of the Old Testament, we may refer to the miracle recorded in Luke vii. 12, 16: the raising of the widow's son. Here the son, an "only son," the Spirit being but ONE, is the Spirit of Truth, said to be dead. In this case the dead man is represented as being "carried out;" but the carriers were unholy passions, who were carrying their subject, the man, to some contemplated evil,—the condition of St. Paul himself when he was struck down by the SPIRIT OF TRUTH; for the story of St. Paul's conversion, though real, and the raising of the widow's son, a myth, represent the same spiritual phenomenon. A soul, in a career of evil, is "touched" by the Spirit of Truth; and then, as in the case of the widow's son, "they that bare him stand still" (verse 14); that is, when the Truth visits a human soul, its passions are paralyzed, and "stand still;" and a soul, thus affected, feels that "GOD has visited his people" (verse 16).

Miracles are a species of acting parables, while para-

bles are spoken miracles; but they both need interpretation. They both come to us in a written form, and it is as easy to write a miracle as to write a parable; but in the interpretation of either the one or the other, it is necessary to see beyond the letter and discover the underlying sense, not regarding the outward pictures they present, except as symbols.

From what has now been said of the gospels, perhaps their place in history, and some idea of their original object may slowly open up before us, though it is my purpose only to point out the method to be pursued, with a few examples of interpretation.

I do not know to whom I ought to credit the interpretations that will be found in this volume. Some of them are from the ancient Fathers, as I have seen them quoted in modern writings; others, though modified or qualified, may be found in the writings of the Rev. J. Clowes, M. A. Possibly some of them would hardly find an owner anywhere; at all events, I do not wish either to claim them as my own, or to hold any one responsible for them. "No man is independent of the age in which he lives;" and every man's opinions are more or less the product of his education, his reading, and his associations; though all of these may be modified in their influence, to some extent, by individual genius and tendencies. The author has read the works of Plato, and those of Swedenborg, and has no desire to ignore or deny their influence over his view of the subject he is treating, particularly as he is confident

that the sacred books themselves have exercised a still greater influence.

To understand the point of view to be presented, we must consider, in the first place, that the SPIRIT of the LAW, its TRUTH, or SOUL, or, in other words, its LIFE, is a permanent Spirit, extending from generation to generation. It is not simply historically true in the person of Moses, but permanently true in the doctrine attributed to Moses, or published by him. It is not of paramount importance to believe that such a man as Moses lived, and did and said certain things, except that what he did and said has some significance for us, as being something true for us; not merely true for a particular historical time, but true for all time.

The next point to be observed, therefore, is the manner by which the SPIRIT of the sacred writings, as an eternal Spirit, was brought into a temporal scene, by those who determined to represent it, in the form of the history of a person. For this purpose, and with great poetic beauty, a supernatural machinery was resorted to by two of the evangelists, Matthew and Luke. Neither Mark nor John make use of this supernatural machinery, which, as a story to be credited literally, is one of the most monstrous conceits that any superstition ever gave birth to. The Christian world, in an enlightened age, can only be considered as acquiescing in this story by a habit of life, the real root of which goes back to a barbarous age, incapable of

distinguishing between divine poetry and profane verity. But as a mode of representing the Spirituality of the principle whose action in the Soul it was the purpose of the writers to image forth through a mythical life, the story becomes invested with extraordinary beauty.

Although John does not speak of a supernatural birth, nor indeed of a birth at all, simply telling us that the WORD was "made" flesh, yet he sufficiently declares the supernatural character of the Spirit of Truth.

Mark introduces JESUS as the SON OF GOD; but he, like John, says nothing of any birth of the so-called SON OF GOD. He is heralded by John the Baptist, and then it is said: And it came to pass, in those days (without telling us what days), that JESUS came from Nazareth, of Galilee, and was baptized of John, in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the *Spirit* like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from Heaven *saying:* Thou art my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased. *He saw*—not the writer of the gospel, but CHRIST himself saw the heavens opened, and heard the voice, there being no witness but himself. I have no language by which to express my sense of the beauty of this description. The Spirit of Truth alone sees, "for itself, and not another," that divine sanction and approval, which is here boldly put into life as a voice from heaven; Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. This, be it observed, was after

baptism in Jordan, and Jordan was the Jewish Ganges, or sacred river, which, for us, must be understood to be simply the symbol of Spiritual Life.

Each of the gospel writers, after a manner of his own, refers to the supernatural character of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH; but this was entirely in accordance with the custom of ancient times in the East. Everywhere we meet with something of it. Whoever undertook to set forth a public Teacher, from the Ganges to the Nile, and from the Nile to the Ultima Thule, took care always to assert an origin in the heavens, in some mode or other. Thus Hercules was said to have been "the son of the king of the gods, by a mortal woman;" and in the life and labors of Hercules we have a picture of Virtue, as it was understood by the early Greeks. All ancient religions are traced back to some person reputed divine, as Osiris, Bacchus, Apollo, &c., though no such persons ever lived. Their names and characters serve to represent the *idea* of the age in which their mythical histories took form.

In a similar manner JESUS CHRIST represents the idea of Reason, Virtue, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, &c., as these were apprehended by the Essenes, who recognized the Spirit as the Life of the Old Testament, which was, to them, both a religion and a philosophy. There is no doubt that Hercules was the Sun; and his twelve labors represent his yearly passage through the twelve signs of the zodiac. All ancient religions show indisputable evidence of their reference to the visible heavens. The genuine fable of king Arthur

with his *twelve* knights of the *Round* table—for there are many imitative tales of this solar hero—belongs to the same class. Those fables had a double purpose, an astronomical and a religious purpose. The initiated only understood the whole import. The passage in the Smaragdine Table, of Hermes—"things above are like those below, and things below are like those above, for working the miracles of one thing"—is a mystical reference to this double meaning of ancient fables. It was an obscure hint to the student to explain one by the other.

We are not to suppose that the gospel writers intended to confine their representations of a divine life in man, through CHRIST, to any one feature in particular. Very far from it. In many places, indeed, CHRIST appears simply as a moral exemplar or teacher; in which character he is made a channel for the interpretation of the Hebrew sacred books, or an exponent of their spiritual influence. In other places he is made to shadow out the most irrepresentable thing in the universe, and that is Life itself. This is absolutely invisible to the natural eye, and incommensurable in itself; a pervading something whose influence everything in the universe feels, but which has never been and never can be described by mere imagery.

Without taking any unwarrantable liberty with the text, we may consider Life as referred to in many of those passages of Scripture where the expression MIDST is used. Life is in the *midst* of all things, yet invisible. Thus, in Matt. xviii. 2, the child is placed in the *midst*

of the disciples; as, in Luke xxiv. 36, CHRIST is represented as appearing in the *midst* of the disciples. In John's description of the crucified three (the three representing the trinity of body, soul, and spirit), it is not without meaning that CHRIST, as Life, is described as in the *midst*,—the other gospel writers being careful to express the same thing, though without using the word midst, according to the English translation. In Rev. vii. 17, also, we see that the LAMB is described as in the *midst*,—answering to the ONE, seen in the *midst* of the seven golden candlesticks, said to be like unto the Son of man (Rev. i. 13).

We may see many similar allusions, a multitude of them indeed, in the Old Testament. Thus, in Zec. ii. 5: For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about: and will be the glory in the *midst* of her (that is, in the midst of the Spiritual Jerusalem). In the 10th verse of the same chapter we find the same expression: Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the *midst* of thee, saith the Lord. Here the Lord is Life, life in the *midst*. In Zec. viii. 3, we find the same expression; that the Lord will dwell in the *midst* of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem (that is, the Spiritual Zion) shall be called a city of Truth. Similar language is used in many of the prophetic writings; as, in Zeph. iii. 5, 15, and in Joel ii. 27, &c., as also in Deut. iv. 12, and in Deut. v. 4, &c.

Again; it was from the *midst* of the fire in the bush that GOD called to Moses; and it was in the *midst*, or,

as we read, from "between" the two cherubim (whose inner wings, like soul and body, touched each other) that GOD communed with Moses; or, as it might have been expressed, it was there that Moses communed with GOD; and what do the two cherubim express but the two co-ordinate principles in the mystic trinity, the mediating principle "between" being the Life in the *midst?*—so mysteriously referred to by Ezekiel, to whom the "appearance" was as "the likeness of a man." Here, also, the likeness was seen in the *midst* (Ezek. i. 5); as if man, "the image of GOD," saw only himself or his own image in the universe, the ground, perhaps, of Swedenborg's postulate that GOD is a man, the vision of the High and Holy One being always according to the state of the man, an angel of light to one, a demon of darkness to another.

CHRIST is "the way, the truth, and the life;" and we must suppose that all of these are represented in the gospels. But Life is invisible. It may nevertheless be personified and represented in many ways, even in death, or as that which lives in death, or in the *midst* of destroying elements. Thus, it is represented as walking unharmed in the *midst* of fire: not that such a scene was ever witnessed, but the picture was resorted to as a mode of representing that Life is more powerful than the elements, and cannot be destroyed even by fire, the most destructive of the elements. Where this is represented in Daniel, we may observe that the *four*, one of whom was "like the SON OF GOD" (an expression not to be overlooked), were seen "walking in the

midst of the fire" (chapter iii. v. 25); and when the three came forth, they "came forth of the *midst* of the fire:" the *three* in this scene representing the trinity of indestructible principles, sustained in unity or entireness by the Spirit of Truth, or the Life, said to be "like the SON OF GOD."

It is something more than a metaphysical subtlety to say that death does not appertain to Life, and can only visit the forms of living things, which are the manifestations of life. Life cannot die. That of man, which dies, is not life. Neither does life fear death, such a fear being the property only of that which dies, and dies itself with that which dies. Life is the one (thing) which, if it could be conceived apart from the conception of it, would not be one. Herein lies the peculiarity of the knowledge of GOD, distinguishing it from every other kind of knowledge. It conceives, but cannot be conceived, in the ordinary meaning of this expression, which regards its object under a sense of "otherness." Still less can such knowledge be represented by imagery; and this is the reason why it has so often been written about in Symbolism, as in the Scriptures, where GOD is called a fire simply to convey the idea that nothing can withstand his power; yet he, as life, is represented as walking unharmed in the *midst* of fire, for even this destructive element cannot destroy life. One of the profoundest declarations in the Scriptures indicating this, occurs in John x. 18, where CHRIST speaks of his power to lay down his life and to take it again. Here CHRIST speaks as the per-

sonified Life, which cannot die. This mode of speaking is similar to that of several other passages, as, where he says, *My* peace I give unto you; and, in another place, where he is said to give the *living water*. It is not a person that speaks in any of these cases, but the personified Life, which man, as a phenomenal being, can neither give nor take away.

We are now to consider that the Hebrew Scriptures do really contain, or express, a certain Spirit; a Spirit of Wisdom, of Truth, of Reason; or a Spirit of Life, not really existing as an individual person, limited to a particular period of time, or circumscribed in space, but a life-spirit, older than Abraham, and, indeed, as John boldly expresses it, the LOGOS which was with GOD in the beginning, and was GOD. The writers of the gospels have given us their opinion of this Truth, this Spirit, this Wisdom, this Logos, this Reason, or Life of the Hebrew Scriptures in the form of a history, as that of a person, whom they bring upon the scene of life by a supernatural machinery, or in a supernatural character, because it never appears in any single man whole and entire. Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is GOD.

But, although this is true of individual men, nothing is more certain than that the life of truth, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, may be represented ideally in the form of a history; and this, in so transcendent a picture as to be revered as a truly divine life; especially when the seeming history comes to us from a remote age, and when the origin of the history is measurably enveloped

in obscurity. Every man can conceive, and may represent a better life than he can live; and every nation has its ideally perfect men, who have been regarded as divine, popular opinion readily falling into this delusion. If this was true of Hercules, who was worshiped in Greece, and elsewhere, as a divine personage, much more may it be true of a far greater than Hercules, the model-man, JESUS CHRIST. That his life should, in some particulars, seem to have been the fulfillment of prophecy, is only what the writers themselves designed should appear, and had entirely under their own control. They wrote, with the Hebrew Scriptures before them, and for the purpose of giving a seeming fulfillment in time to what referred intrinsically to an eternal life. Writing the histories for the purpose of representing in a historical form, the Spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures, or, in a higher sense, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH itself, the authors naturally found places, or made occasions for saying that such or such things were done, that such or such a prophecy might be fulfilled. This adds to the verisimilitude of the story, but is no proof of the fulfillment of prophecy; and students of this subject now very well understand that none of the prophecies referred to in the gospels are prophecies of precisely such a *person* as JESUS CHRIST—who is not represented as like "a root out of the ground," nor have we any reason for believing that he was "*without form or comeliness.*" So far was he from being without beauty, that many seem disposed to think he was the perfection of beauty, while a prediction of one, as a

man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, may be applied to millions, and cannot be regarded as prophetic of any one individual.

Once upon the stage, the writers of the histories make JESUS represent by his doings and sayings, what, in their opinion, the Hebrew Scriptures were capable of accomplishing in the soul of one who received and appropriated those Scriptures in spirit and in truth.

There is no appearance of anything miraculous in the sayings of CHRIST, even though it be admitted that he spake as man never spake before. Excellency of speech is a question of degree; and as some men speak better than others, so some one man must speak better than all. But the acts of JESUS, if regarded literally as historically represented, would overthrow all of our ideas of the order of providence, and introduce confusion into all of our opinions upon the permanence of the laws of nature; and as it is only through the permanence of these laws that we retain the idea of GOD'S unchangeable nature, the admission of the history of CHRIST'S doings as literally true, would destroy our opinion of GOD'S immutability; and with the destruction of this doctrine we should lose the very principle by which truth is distinguished from falsehood, wisdom from folly, and righteousness from sin.

But there is not the least necessity for regarding the relations in question as literal representations of actual things done by CHRIST. We may and must look at them as symbolic teaching, resorted to by the members of a secret society, all of the physical miracles

symbolizing the power of TRUTH in producing moral and spiritual results. Thus, Leprosy, among the Jews, whatever may have been the precise nature of this disorder, symbolized sin; and when CHRIST is represented as cleansing a leper by a "touch" (Matt. viii. 1–5), we are to understand that when the TRUTH *touches* a human soul, its sin or sinful disposition departs. We may observe that in Matt. ix. 12, *sinners* are designated as the *sick*, and it is declared, v. 13, that the "whole," that is, the (morally) healthy, need not a physician, showing that the mission of JESUS was to the morally sick: he says, also, in the same connection, that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

The *devils* (Matt. viii. 16, 17), which were "cast out," cast out by the Spirit of Truth, were bad passions; which, in their influence over man, are well compared to devils. They are generally, in Scripture, called ravenous birds and beasts, as vultures, cormorants, dragons, vipers, &c. When serpents and devils are said to tempt man, these are metaphorical expressions for evil affections and passions; and when angels are said to support, strengthen, and minister unto him, these are good principles which sustain, beautify, and reward him.

The *wind* and *waves* of Matt. viii. 23–27, are also violent and turbulent passions, which it is the office of TRUTH to "still"—and so for other similar miracles.

The *blind* are the blind in understanding; and the TRUTH is well compared in Scripture to light, whose presence removes the darkness of ignorance.

The *dead* are those who are dead to the TRUTH; and who, on being "touched" by the SPIRIT of TRUTH, are restored to life—that is, to reason and truth. That this is the true interpretation we may be assured by observing the language used in the parable of the Prodigal Son: This, my son, was *dead* and is *alive* again (Luke xv. 24): and also by the expression, Let the dead bury their dead (Matt. viii. 22)—this language being always understood as referring to those who were unawakened to the truth. We may make the same inference from the fact that we hear no more of those that were restored, but they were left without further notice to pass through the real "dark valley" which receives all mankind, the Teacher included. St. Paul makes a similar metaphorical use of language, speaking of those who were *dead* in trespasses and sins.

The *loaves* and *fishes* symbolize doctrine, the dead letter and the living truth, as I have already intimated; and this may feed its thousands without diminution. CHRIST represents the *bread* of life, that is, the *doctrine* of life, which may be imparted to multitudes, and yet there shall remain many baskets of fragments; for no one is the poorer, but rather the richer, by what he imparts to others of the TRUTH. The qualities of wisdom are the reverse of those of worldly treasures, for they are not dissipated by use, nor by division or distribution to others. Hence CHRIST tells us to lay up treasures in heaven; that is, in wisdom, where neither

moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

The miracle of tongues at Pentecost teaches, that all men are capable of understanding the Law in their own Spirit; which, then, is represented as speaking in their own language; that is, all men are endowed with a conscience which teaches them or commands them to obey the RIGHT—to secure which is the object of the written law; and when the SPIRIT OF TRUTH visits or pervades a human soul, this sense of RIGHT becomes endowed with superhuman power, and sustains men through even the agonies of the cross.

The *Lame*, the *Blind*, the *Dumb*, the *Maimed*, are the morally lame, the spiritually blind, the stupidly dumb, and the ignorantly maimed, all of whom are restored by the SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

We are told in sufficiently plain language, in the 13th chapter of Matthew, by a reference to Isaiah, the nature of the blindness and deafness which was cured by the Spirit of Truth. To say of a people that "seeing they see not," is the same thing as saying, they see, but do not understand. In the 14th verse, the meaning is perfectly plain: By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. The 15th verse still further explains the sense, by giving a reason; that the people's heart had "waxed gross," and therefore it was that their ears had become "dull of hearing, and their eyes they had closed." This language is so manifestly metaphorical, that any one ought to *see* and *understand* it, whose

attention is called to it. But we are so much in the habit of *hearing* these verses read without stopping to think of their meaning, that we neither *understand* nor *perceive* their plain import.

Whatever may be thought of these interpretations, it is certain that a large portion of the Scriptures must be interpreted so as to yield some other than a literal sense; and this is done, in fact, for particular passages of Scripture by every adult reader. The only question is as to the extent, or how far the interpretation may be carried: but this is a question of degree only, and acknowledges the principle that *some* interpretation is necessary. I suppose, myself, that no one system of interpretation can adequately explain this very composite and complicated book, which expresses what may be called astronomical, physical, moral, and spiritual principles in every variety of form. The astronomic theory has attracted and riveted the attention of many learned and ingenious scholars. But this theory does not sufficiently recognize the moral and spiritual elements everywhere found in the Bible; and although the writers of the gospels, by their introduction of the *twelve* disciples, may have purposely glanced at the twelve patriarchs and tribes, which originally may have had reference to the twelve constellations of the zodiac, still, it seems certain that the gospels were conceived in quite another spirit, which no astronomical references can explain. That sun-worship, or, in a larger sense, nature-worship, was anciently universal, there is every reason to believe, and this theory sufficiently explains

the *Apis* or Bull-worship in Egypt, and that of *Mithra* in Persia, &c., the *Sun* passing through Taurus in the spring of the year, the beginning of blessings; and, certainly, it is remarkable that, by the precession of the Equinoxes, Aries changed places with Taurus in this respect, near the advent of CHRIST, while Virgo occupies a conspicuous place in the astronomic theory at the same period. But admitting all this, I see in it only a mere framework, in itself unimportant, while in the gospels I recognize the expression of something much more profound, which at most the astronomic allusions can only symbolize. The learning and ingenuity employed in the exposition of the astronomic theory, I hold in the highest respect; but as it leaves what I must, for convenience, call the Spiritual element cold and lifeless, I prefer another view, and must work it out as I can, according to the principles I have suggested.* I therefore proceed with my remarks, and must repeat that miracles are a species of (written) acting parables, and were designed to teach, or illustrate, by imagery, the power of TRUTH in the soul. No man sees a thought, an affection, a passion; and the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, which ought to be the Lord of these, is absolutely invisible. Hence, theologians, poets, and even philosophers, have been constrained to personify them, and have discoursed about them in parables, figures, and symbols. Therefore, whatever CHRIST is represented as

* The astronomic theory is unreservedly exhibited at full length by Dupuis.

doing contrary to the order of nature, we must understand by considering that it is entirely within the order of nature, that the writers of the gospels, desiring to represent, in the person of CHRIST, the power of TRUTH in the soul of man, should figure that power in a succession of symbolic miracles.

Thus, the TRUTH enables a man to walk on the waters; that is, on the fluctuating, and often stormy waves of popular opinion. No one, having thoroughly given himself to the TRUTH, feels at the mercy of the opinions of others: he walks on the waters. But the difficulty of doing this is represented in the case of Peter, who found the popular turbulence too much for him, and he cried for help.

There may be a profounder meaning to this, where the "waters" are taken to signify the movable and fluctuating character of external and visible nature, which furnishes no Ariadne's thread to the senses, by which the soul may be guided through the dark and mysterious maze. But that which the senses cannot provide in this direction, the Spirit of Truth does supply to those who, in simple fidelity, or faith, have learned to rely upon it.

Many acts of JESUS, not miraculous, are also pure symbolic teaching; thus, when CHRIST is represented as washing the feet of his disciples, saying (John xiii. 8): If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;—the meaning is, simply, that no man has any part in TRUTH, whose externals, or whose life is not washed, or purified

by the TRUTH—of which the ceremony of baptism itself is but a symbol.

When CHRIST is represented as catching *fishes* in the SEA, by casting the net on the "right side," or teaching others to do so, we must understand by the Sea, the great ocean of TRUTH—from the depths of which it is the office of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH to draw up *fishes*, that is, living Truth. This sort of fishes is called "living water" in John iv. 10, 14.

In these verses of John, the *well* which Jacob had given, and of which he had drunk, as also his children and cattle, represents, as I have already intimated, the *written* word, the *letter;* the "flesh" (John vi. 63) that "profiteth nothing;" that is, by itself. Whosoever drinks of this, shall thirst again (John iv. 13); but the water that CHRIST gives, is the Spirit of the Letter, the "blood" of the "flesh" that "quickeneth." Hence, CHRIST says that this "living water" shall be, in those who receive it, a well of water springing up into everlasting life; for TRUTH is inexhaustible and perennial.

CHRIST, I say, represents the Hebrew Scriptures and the SPIRIT OF TRUTH; not a historical person, for the Spirit is invisible, and has never been seen as a person. As a visible person, even CHRIST (the written New Testament to us), he is Jacob's well; and whosoever drinks of this water only, shall thirst again, and shall continue to thirst, until he drinks of the Spirit, that is, of the unseen CHRIST. By calling this the Spirit, or the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, I merely give it a name; I do not define it. But it is the name that CHRIST has given it

(John xvi. 13). This Spirit, we are told, will guide those who possess it into all TRUTH. It speaks by an authority independent of the will, and hence it is said to speak independently of man; or, by a metonymy, the man, under its influence, does not speak of himself (John xvi. 13). This Spirit shall glorify CHRIST (verse 14), because it is CHRIST; and *he* shall take of CHRIST'S (that is, of the Truth), and show it to those who have the same Spirit (verse 15); and it shall come, and go, while man is in the flesh (verse 17): all of which things, and many others, are said in proverbs (verse 25); and the object of all is, that the Soul may have peace (verse 33), the peace of GOD. This is the Spirit which, under the name of the Comforter, it was said, should teach all things (John xiv. 26), meaning, of course, all things of itself; and it was promised (same verse) that it should bring to remembrance whatever CHRIST had spoken; because, as CHRIST was set forward to speak in the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, those in whom this Spirit lives have, within themselves, the principle from which CHRIST spake; the "living water," by which he spake: and this is a free Spirit, accessible to all who choose to drink of it. Hence the language of Isaiah: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

The *wine* here spoken of is that "living water" of which CHRIST speaks; the living *fishes* drawn from the great ocean of TRUTH by those who cast the net on the right side.

In the mystical transits of which we read in the gospels (Mark iv. 35; v. 1, and elsewhere), from one *side* to the *other*, we may understand the mystical transit which a soul makes in contemplating, now the Letter, and now the Spirit; or, in a higher sense, the world, as it is represented, and the world which is represented—though it may appear, in the end, that these two are one and the same; for, as there is but one GOD, so there is but one universe.

As this ocean of Truth is the Sea from whence are drawn living *fishes*, I am naturally led to refer to the symbolism by which CHRIST is represented as teaching by the sea-side (Matt. xiii. 1; Mark ii. 13; iv. 1), &c., for that Sea is the ocean of eternity. In the world, we may be said to be on the "shore" of that ocean; but by a mystical passage to the "other side," the soul seems to stand in the full light of TRUTH; and then, personified, the SPIRIT of TRUTH is represented as seated in a *ship*, teaching a multitude upon the shore (Matt. xiii. 2); but the teaching is in *parables* (verse 3); and what are parables but Truth presented in similitudes? We should understand that TRUTH, in a spiritual sense, is as boundless as eternity, and is well symbolized by the sea; and when it is apprehended in this highest character, it seems to carry the soul away from the things of time, and pours upon it a flood of glory. If, in this light, the soul speaks, it indeed does not speak as of itself, but it speaks the words it hears from the Father; and this is what the world has agreed to call inspiration. A soul thus speaking is

beautifully represented as seated in a ship in the sea, the ocean of eternity.

But Truth is not only a Sea, it is also a Mountain; and a holy soul is a holy mountain, a mountain of the LORD—of which we read so much in the Scriptures. It is from this holy mount that we have received the SERMON OF SERMONS. But as multitudes of men, living in their sensuous nature and veiled over by the things of time, do not easily distinguish this ocean, this sea, this mountain, they are represented as "standing on the *shore* of the sea," or as "coming to the Mount," to hear the words of TRUTH from another. We, of this age, may with humility confess ourselves to be of the multitude—and we hear the voice of CHRIST as if speaking from the bosom of the infinite; and what, among other things, does he say? In the very midst of his teaching (Matt. xi. 15) he exclaims: He that has ears to hear, let him hear: and to hear, in the Scripture, means, almost everywhere, to understand—as if there was something more intended than is seen in the literal sense. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear, is again urged in Matt. xiii. 9, and in the very same chapter, to enforce the warning, it is repeated in verse 43, He that hath ears, let him hear; the same exhortation occurring repeatedly in the Revelation, and elsewhere in the Scriptures. In Matt. xxiv. 15, the record is: Whoso readeth, let him understand. We should not take this as a warning to understand a part of the gospel, but we should feel ourselves called upon again and

again to understand the whole of it;—and shall we make no attempt to do so?

The expression, Whoso readeth let him understand, is manifestly a "gloss," made by some reader in early ages, and afterwards incorporated by some copyist into the text; for such language could not have been used by an oral teacher. It serves to show that the reader, whoever he was, saw the necessity of an interpretation of the writing, and noted it in the margin of his copy. This, and several similar interpolations, may show us also one of the modes by which the record has been tampered with.

It was undoubtedly the opinion of the time, how far just or otherwise I cannot say, that the common people could not understand the doctrine of the Spirit, the essential TRUTH which was taught figuratively and symbolically through CHRIST;—and hence we read of cautions, not to throw pearls to swine, and not to give the children's bread to the dogs; and we are expressly told that CHRIST spake "to the people" only in parables.

One of the reasons for this, must be explained by the supposition that the real authors, or writers, of the gospels, belonged to a (Masonic) brotherhood, the ESSENES, sworn to hold their doctrine of the Spirit a secret; though this secrecy itself must have grown out of the opinion that, to the generality of men, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH is not only invisible, but incomprehensible; and such men, it was thought, must be left in possession of their idols, the *letter*, the *water*, the *flesh*, the *bread*,

as the next best thing; the Spirit (of truth) having originally generated the letter through the great teachers of the nation, Moses and the prophets.

The Essenes were sworn, as I have said, not to speak of their doctrine, except among each other; and they were sworn, also, not to write of it, except in allegory and symbolism. This is expressly stated by Philo; and upon this, and other statements, Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, as late as the fourth century, gives the opinion that *the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament were the secret books of the Essenes.* His language is, speaking of the brotherhood, and of their secret books: "It is highly probable, that the ancient commentaries which he [Philo] says they [the Essenes] have, are the very gospels and writings of the Apostles, and probably some expositions of the ancient prophets, such as are contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and many others of St. Paul's Epistles."

This opinion was given by Eusebius, in connection with the assumption that the Essenes were the early Christians, before having received the Christian name. To establish this assumption, the historian recites many points of similitude between the doctrines and usages of the two sects, which he thinks "irrefragable testimony" in support of his opinion—returning again and again to the proofs to remove all doubt. In one place he makes extracts from Philo "respecting those of our communion" (as he calls the Essenes), which he "deems obvious and indisputable;" and then adds: "But, should any one still be so hardy as to contradict, let him,

at least, abandon his incredulity, by yielding to the more powerful demonstrations, which are to be found among none but in the religion of Christians, according to the gospel;" referring then to still further proofs.

He saw in "their meetings [the meetings of the Essenes], and the separate abodes of the men and the women in those meetings, and the exercises performed by them," what was "still in vogue among" the Christians of his own day; referring, especially, to "the festival of our Saviour's passion," which (as he says) the Essenes were "accustomed to pass in fasting and watching, and in the study of the divine word." "All these (he adds), the above-mentioned author [Philo] has accurately described and stated in his writings, and are *the same customs that are observed by us alone*, at the present day, particularly the vigils of the great festival, and the exercises in them, and the hymns that are commonly recited among us." The translator of Eusebius tells us, in a note upon this passage, that the *festival* referred to was that of Passion week, which precedes the feast of Easter.

After stating some other similitudes of practice between the Essenes, of Philo's time, and the Christians, of his own time, he adds: "Besides this, he [Philo] describes the grades of dignity among those who administer the ecclesiastical services committed to them, those of the deacons and the presidencies of the episcopate as the highest. But [he concludes], whosoever desires to have a more accurate knowledge of these

things, may learn them from the history already cited; but that Philo, when he wrote these statements, *had in view the first heralds of the gospel, and the original practices, handed down from the Apostles, must be obvious to all.*"

In reading what Eusebius says of the Essenes, as described by Philo, and of the Christians of his own time, we must distinguish his testimony to the similitude of doctrine and usage between the two societies, from his opinion, that the Essenes were the early Christians, and also from his opinion that the *secret* books of the former were the *sacred* books of the latter. His testimony to the fact of the similitude, may be regarded as decisive; for the usages of the Christians of his day fell, of course, intimately under his own observation, as a Bishop.

We may consider, therefore, that the Essenes and the Christians were the same society, under different names:—and then the question arises—Did the society originate at or before the new era?

It will be very difficult to explain how the early Christians, dating from the advent of CHRIST, could first have originated a society under a name having no connection with their own, and afterwards adopt another name.

It will be still more difficult to explain how the early Christians could have had among them men living to the age of one hundred years, within the life-time of

Josephus, as stated by him of the Essenes, when Josephus himself was born, according to received accounts, only twenty-seven years after the new era; and not exceeding ten years after any possible date at which a Christian society could have been formed; for no such society can be supposed to have preceded the preaching of John the Baptist.

It will be impossible also, upon the supposition of Eusebius, to account for there being a considerable society of Christians so far from Jerusalem as Alexandria, within the life-time of Philo, who gives us the account of the contemplative Essenes.

But it is a waste of time to dwell upon this point. No one, disposed to look at the question fairly can fail to see that the position of Eusebius is surrounded with insurmountable difficulties; while the supposition, that the Essenes were an old sect, or a secret society among the Jews, removes all serious historical difficulties.

The testimony of Eusebius to the unity of the two societies, remains, I say, unquestioned; but his opinion that the Essenes were the early Christians, must give way to the inference, from historical grounds, that the Christians were derived from the Essenes. In short, the Essenes were not the early Christians, but the Christians were the later Essenes; that is, the Essenes of the time of Eusebius under a changed name, that change having been made at Antioch, where the disciples (of Truth) were first called Christians (Acts xi. 26).

But I shall show, in another place, that this name

was given to only a portion of the Essenes; the portion that had been added to their number from those "without,"—a significant word in the New Testament —through the preaching of St. Paul and others, who had not passed into the society by the "right door;" that is, they were not thoroughly indoctrinated or initiated into the secrets of the Essenes; for those secrets cannot be adopted externally: they must be lived, internally. This opinion is precisely in harmony with the teaching of many evangelical divines of the present day, who understand very well that Christianity is a life, and not a mere formal doctrine with carefully devised ceremonies, the latter being the "flesh" of CHRIST; whereas it is the Spirit now, as formerly, that giveth life.

Although the mere opinion of Eusebius is not decisive, in regard to the gospels and epistles having been the secret books of the Essenes, still, the opinion itself may be entirely correct, and a consideration of the doctrines, compared with those of the Essenes, as well as the symbolic mode of teaching them, will show it to be so.

Eusebius was, no doubt, seduced into an expression of the opinion above cited, by his anxiety to establish the point, that the Essenes were the Christians before receiving the latter name; but then, on the other hand, this anxiety itself grew out of the unity, visible in his time, between the doctrines and usages of the Christians and those of the Essenes, as described by Philo and Josephus.

This unity, or similitude, was so evident and striking, that the ecclesiastical historian became extremely earnest in his efforts to show that the Essenes were the early Christians, discussing this point through several pages. But, then, the reason for this earnestness and anxiety to prove that the Essenes were the primitive Christians, could have been no other than this: Eusebius plainly saw that, unless this point could be established, an adverse view would become unavoidable—a position which Mr. De Quincey has recently advanced in a popular essay, in which he asserts that, unless it can be shown that the Essenes were the early Christians, it must be conceded that there was no need of a revelation through CHRIST, as his teachings were all anticipated by the Essenes.

Mr. De Quincey has the temerity, even, to place the very existence of Christianity, as a revealed religion, upon the single point of being able to show a fraudulent substitution of the name of the Essenes, by Josephus, in place of that of the Christians, in his account of the doctrines of the former sect among the Jews. The possibility of some such position as this was, in all probability, distinctly visible to Eusebius, and hence his efforts to absorb the Essenes into the Christian circle. But a genuine historic criticism must reverse this order, and teach us that the Essenes were originally a class of spiritual interpreters of the Jewish sacred books; and then we must see, that the Christians of the time of Eusebius had been unable to main-

tain themselves in a purely spiritual doctrine, but had fallen away from it and had returned to the letter, adding the letter of the New to that of the Old Testament, there being, in fact, but one Testament, one Truth, expressed in the Old, and interpreted, though symbolically, in the New Testament.

It will be seen that, from the view taken in this work, it is an error to look upon the wisdom of CHRIST as that of an individual, or, as it is sometimes expressed, that of the lowly JESUS, the humble son of a carpenter. The wisdom of the gospels is the accumulated wisdom of ages, expressed through the sages of the Jewish people, the Essene devotees, who passed their lives in the practice of virtue, and in the study of books, held to be divine because of the wisdom contained or expressed in them. We shall yet see that the carpenter's son had a predecessor in Hiram the Builder, the builder of a house not made with hands. CHRIST is the mysterious life that builds the temple of the Holy Ghost.

SECTION VII.

If the Essenes had a doctrine which they were sworn to hold as a secret, it may be asked—how can the doctrine now be known? In answer to this question, several considerations must be weighed. The whole of Philo's writings furnish matter for study in connection with this topic. He does not, indeed, disclose a secret of the Essenes, as such; but he has stated an important principle by which, as he says, they interpreted the sacred Jewish writings, regarding the letter of those writings as the body of an animate creature, and the internal sense as the soul. Now, no living creature can possibly be conceived to have entered into this view but man. The sacred books were written by men, were addressed to men, and are to be understood only by men. Hence, we must see that the soul of man holds mysteriously, in spirit, the whole of those books; and the soul of man must interpret them. Therefore, nothing can be more simple, or more beautiful, than the idea of personifying this Soul and giving it a history, as that of a person, whose life must be made to express the invisible wisdom of the Scriptures.

The works of Philo will assist any one incalculably in understanding the older Scriptures, and help to pre-

pare for a comprehension of the later writings, founded upon them; for his entire works are but little else than interpretations of the Hebrew sacred books, from what may be called a spiritual point of view—such as we may readily suppose was current among the Essenes, particularly after we have made a study of what Philo says of those extraordinary people.

Again: we must consider that no actual *Truth* can be confined to the members of a secret society. I do not speak of conventional signs of recognition, which the Essenes had, as the Masons now have; for these serve only for a local and a limited purpose, and may perish with it, without any loss to humanity. But no one can imagine that positive truths, like those of science, fall into this class. Such truths cannot be appropriated by a secret society, and be withheld from the world at large.

It is the same with what may be called spiritual Truth; and this doctrine is taught, as I consider, in the Gospel, where it is stated that JESUS stood in the midst of the disciples, "the doors being shut" (John xx. 19). Let any one be shut within doors ever so closely, prison doors, if you choose, and so much of TRUTH as he possesses, so much as he has appropriated by a life of truth, will visit him, and will whisper in his soul, "peace be unto you."

CHRIST also teaches, that where two or three are gathered together, *in his name* (in the name of Truth), there he is in the midst of them (Matt. xviii. 20); and so it must be. Let two or three gather together in

the sacred name of *Truth*, and the SPIRIT OF TRUTH will preside over their deliberations and studies, and in all assemblies where this Spirit presides we see the blessing of harmony, peace, and unity. Hence CHRIST is called the Mediator, mediating between GOD and man, and among men also.

It is an important fact that the secret doctrine of the Essenes was penetrated by St. Paul, who was a Pharisee, without the ceremonies of an initiation, so far as we know. This is what he means when he tells us that he received his doctrine by inspiration; that he was not taught by flesh and blood, and did not even "confer" with the apostles. A recent writer on Masonry (Dr. Oliver) refers indeed to the Epistle to the Galatians as a truly Masonic Epistle! If so, we may explain it by supposing that St. Paul became a member of the mystic order after his discovery of the truth, and wrote some of his epistles after his initiation. However this may be, St. Paul saw that the Scriptures, in the letter, or outward sense, carried but a slight and superficial meaning; and that, in order to appreciate them properly, their inward sense must be discovered and appropriated; that is, in the language of Ezekiel iii. 1, 3, the roll of a book must be "eat;" and then it is in "the mouth as honey for sweetness." * The doc-

* What can this passage in Ezekiel signify, but that the prophet saw for himself, or was instructed in the inward sense or meaning of some of the Hebrew sacred books, which existed in "rolls," and thereupon became a teacher in Israel? To *eat* a book can only mean to understand it, or, as Lord Bacon said, to "digest" it. To

trine of the *Spirit*, as underlying the *Letter*, is the essential doctrine of St. Paul. It is he who says that the Letter killeth, but that the Spirit giveth LIFE; and it is St. Paul who, addressing the Galatians, gives us the interpretation of the allegory, as he calls it, of Abraham and his two wives, Sarah and Hagar. That this mode of interpreting the Scriptures was common in the early ages of Christianity we may be sure, by the declarations of many of the Fathers of the Church, and those of the very highest repute. Thus, Origen warns us in this language:—That,

"Since the Law is a shadow of good things to come, and writes sometimes of marriages and husbands and wives; we are not to understand it of marriages of the flesh, but of the spiritual marriage between CHRIST and his Church. As for instance, Abraham had two wives, &c. Here we ought not to confine our thoughts to carnal marriages, and their offsprings; but to extend them to the mysteries here signified. And there are almost a thousand other places in Scripture about marriages; but every place should have a divine, moral, and mystical construction put upon it. Whoever, therefore, reads the Scriptures about marriages, and understands no more by them than carnal marriages; he

eat of the "flesh" of the Son of Man, and to drink of his "blood" means the same thing, only this expresses the double character of the Scriptures which CHRIST represented. In like manner we read of a prayer that we may read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred writings; which, of course, is a prayer that we may understand them, and appropriate them by a life according to them.

errs, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of GOD." *

Origen was not satisfied with this declaration alone: he adds that, "the Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written:" he goes even further, and says that "the source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or external part of Scripture;" and finally, as if he thought that resting in the literal sense was an immeasurable evil, he says expressly, that "those who do so, shall not attain to the KINGDOM of GOD." This may very fairly be considered as an illustrative commentary upon the address to Nicodemus (John iii. 3): Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. "Let us seek, therefore," says Origen, "for the Spirit and the substantial fruits of the WORD, which are hidden and mysterious."

Origen writes like an Essene, whether he was one or not, and virtually tells us, only in more open language, that "the *flesh* profiteth nothing" (John vi. 63); that, we must be born of the *water* and also of the *Spirit:* that we must eat of the *flesh* and drink also of the *Blood* of the SON of MAN: that we must partake of the *bread* and also of the *wine:* that if we drink only of the water of Jacob's well we shall thirst again;

* Even St. Paul writes very particularly of marriage in his Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter v., and lest his reader should not understand him, he interprets himself in verse 32: This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST and the Church.

and that we must drink of that *living* water which is the hidden and mysterious Spirit of the sacred writings. John (1st Ep. v. 6) is very particular in setting forth that JESUS CHRIST came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood; meaning, I suppose, that JESUS CHRIST, the minister of the circumcision, as St. Paul calls him (Rom. xv. 8), taught from a knowledge of both the letter and the spirit of the sacred books, by which he was enabled to explain "all parables" (Mark iv. 13). John has not written more openly in his epistles than in his gospel. Surely this is the doctrine of the ancient church, whether we are able to discover the Spirit or not? But there is much more of this.

Origen says again, of the Scriptures: "There are some things inserted as history, which were never transacted, and which it is impossible should be transacted; and other things, again, that might possibly be done, but were not."

St. Hilary says: "There are many historical passages of the New Testament, that if they are taken literally, are contrary to sense and reason [!], and therefore there is a necessity of a mystical interpretation."

By what rule did Origen say, that some of the Scripture relations could not by possibility be historical? By the same rule, undoubtedly, to which St. Hilary appeals, that of sense and reason. But sense and reason recognize only the natural order of providence, and whatsoever is not natural is, to sense and

reason, not merely miraculous, but unnatural and impossible.

St. Augustine says: "There are hidden mysteries in the works and miracles of our SAVIOUR, which, if we incautiously and literally interpret, we shall run into errors, and make grievous blunders."

To avoid falling into these threatened errors, and grievous blunders, we must seek the Spirit of the gospel narrations,—the significance of the miracles and parables,—not as real histories, but as figurative and symbolical representations. This may require patience, study, and self-denial; but what progress has ever been made in any good work without these?

In conformity with these views, Origen interprets the marriage-scene at Cana of Galilee in a spiritual sense, as designed to represent the union of the SPIRIT to the Church,—which turns the WATER, that is, the *letter*, into *wine*, that is, into SPIRIT. This, again, is only another mode of speaking of what St. Paul, in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians illustrates in his allusions to marriage, calling it a great mystery.

The same interpretation, with many details, is given of this miracle, by St. Augustine, by St. Theophilus of Antioch, by St. Cyril, by St. Theophylact, by St. Jerome, and others, as I find these fathers quoted by recent writers on this subject; for candor obliges me to say that I have not consulted the original works. But I must remark, that if human records cannot be depended upon for human knowledge, how can they be relied upon for divine knowledge?—and how many are

there of us who are able to consult the Hebrew Scriptures in the language or languages in which they were written? By the above citations from the fathers we may be certain that this mode of reading and interpreting the Scriptures is so far from being new, that it was beyond all question the genuine practice of early Christians, who had "ears to hear."

As another instance of this mode of interpretation by the fathers of the Church, before the Church had declined, I will barely refer to the casting out of the money-changers from the Temple, and overthrowing "the seats of those that sold doves." Many of the fathers, St. Augustine, Origen, and others, interpret this conduct, attributed to JESUS,—Origen insisting strongly that there is no literal truth in the story,—as referring to the office of TRUTH, when it visits a Church, to cast out of it that worldly disposition which is so apt to creep into it when its spirit has degenerated into formalism. TRUTH is not an object of traffic. It can neither be sold nor bought; for which reason it is called the gift of GOD, and is figured as descending from heaven, in the form of a dove. The dove, therefore, is the symbol of Truth; and hence CHRIST is represented as overturning the seats of those that sold *doves* in the Temple;—not that such a scene ever actually occurred, except as we may even now occasionally see something of it, when a merely professional preacher, educated to gain a livelihood by preaching the gospel, abandons a lucrative position in the external church, and becomes a preacher from a higher sense

of TRUTH, accepting cheerfully whatever worldly consequences may follow in the path of a life consecrated to GOD. Such a preacher is a follower of CHRIST after the manner of St. Paul.

To see the force of such interpretations as the above, we have only to understand and feel that the TRUTH is something more than a name, and is, indeed, the supreme arbiter of all the controversies in the world; a power in itself, though unseen, before which every thing false recedes, as darkness yields to light. To one who contended against it, it was said: It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. Whosoever falls upon it, shall be broken in pieces; and on whomsoever it falls, it shall grind him to powder.

The SPIRIT OF TRUTH, transcendently realized by the gospel writers, is personified in CHRIST; and whatever he is represented as doing in the flesh, symbolizes the power of TRUTH in the soul of man; and as TRUTH, like Virtue, is its own reward, so CHRIST is represented as the reward of those who seek him; for to seek him is to seek the Book of the Lord, as Isaiah expresses it, and this is a state of the soul, and neither a book nor a person.

If it shall appear that some portions of the gospels do not readily yield to this mode of interpretation,—if we cannot discover their sense,—we may conclude that, possibly, we are not in a right condition ourselves for understanding them. We may want experience in life, or may need more detailed information of the history

of the Jews, or of the manners and customs of those among whom the books were written. If, at last, we are compelled to feel our inability to understand the meaning of any particular relation, let us candidly make the acknowledgment, and thus keep the mind open to light. A confession of ignorance can be no offence in the sight of GOD. We may be unable, for example, to understand why CHRIST should have been angry with a fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season (Mark xi. 13), a fact not stated by Matthew in his account of the miracle of the fig-tree. If we look only to the account by Matthew, we may see, as many have seen, in the barren fig-tree a symbol of the unproductive Jewish church, which the SPIRIT OF TRUTH withered with a curse, as was fitting. Let us understand the gospels, if we can; but if we cannot understand them, let us be so candid and honest as to confess our ignorance or inability, and hold our peace,—not forgetting that some of this difficulty may be due to the ignorance of the writers themselves, who may, nay, must have shared to some extent the ignorance of their age.

What is called the Truth of the Scriptures cannot be expressed in any one simple statement, nor in a formal set of statements called a creed. A creed can only set out what one man or set of men believe to be true, as contained or taught in the Bible. If such a statement could express what is commonly called or what is meant by the Truth of the Bible, the volume itself might be dispensed with. The Truth of the Scriptures lies in both their sense as addressed to the intel-

lect, and their influence upon the feelings and affections; and yet this influence is infinitely various, according to the age, sex, and circumstances of the reader.

The Bible brings a message of peace to one, and of terror to another: to one it affords instruction, to another it excites sublime affections—and yet the Bible is one volume.

This affords the widest possible field for representing it as a living creature, moving among its real and its nominal disciples, working miracles, curing the morally sick, enlightening the ignorant, unstopping the ears of the deaf, giving sight to the blind, &c., &c., as I have intimated: and yet, as I have said, the Bible is one volume; and, as expressing Truth, it is one with its Father, for GOD is Truth in the same sense that he is Love; though this declaration of the unity of the Son with the Father has other interpretations, as will be seen presently.

The influence of the Bible is perhaps far more important than its direct teachings, by moving the feelings, and stirring up all the elements of life in man; and yet it is impossible to express this influence by a creed of ever so many articles. This influence has brought to life in millions of men a power that has enabled them to overcome the world, raising them absolutely above the fear of death; but this can hardly be attributed to any of the direct teachings of the volume itself. It is properly its influence, as I call it, and yet the principle of this operation must be in man himself, or the Bible could never bring it into action. No mere creed can do

the office of this influence: nothing, indeed, external to man, can supply the place of the Bible itself to insure both its proper teaching and its influence. I only say this in reference to an exaggerated estimate which some place upon the value of a mere creed, not that any one has ever proposed to substitute any such creed for the Bible itself. The influence of the volume is best appreciated by considering the effect of different portions of it upon different readers. One is profoundly affected by the book of Job; another, perhaps less imaginative, places the highest possible value upon the Proverbs of Solomon. Even Sir Thos. Browne, the remarkable author of the Religion of a Physician, said he could be content to lose all the books in the world, if he could but preserve the Proverbs of Solomon. Some, deeply under the sway of feeling, select the Psalms before all other portions of the Old Testament, and are greatly strengthened and supported by them. Others again, more easily influenced through the imagination, are more moved by the prophecies than by any other portion of Scripture, the visions of Ezekiel carrying them quite away from themselves. Many have exhausted their lives in the study of Daniel and the Revelation, their very obscurity having an inexpressible charm.

The gospels and epistles of the New Testament are equally varied in their influence, different scenes exciting different emotions, according to the state of the individual who comes to their perusal. One dwells upon the Sermon on the Mount; another upon the temptation; another upon the garden of Gethsemane, profoundly af-

fected; while the passion of CHRIST has perhaps moved more hearts than any other portion of Scripture: and those who are thus affected cannot bear the suggestion that the nature of GOD cannot suffer, and that the entire notion of a suffering GOD is a pure imagination.

The influences of the Bible may be thus seen to be infinitely various, according to the diversity of genius brought to its pages. In some cases it has produced a vast amount of mischief, especially where the letter is worshiped, beginning with St. Paul's persecution of the Church; for that was a product of the Letter, and helped to teach St. Paul that the Letter killeth.

The influence of the Bible is not confined to its direct teaching, and it is not simply in the letter; but it is in the Spirit, or that which the letter shadows. It is not seen as a whole by any individual of the present age; not because of its supernatural character, but because no individual of any one age can become perfectly familiar with what is called the spirit of a past, and especially of a remote age. But when any one portion of Scripture comes into light, or is seen to be true, it becomes an aid to further discoveries; and there may be a progress in this extending through many years, while the longest life may leave many portions of the sacred volume still under a veil. To the great body of the Christian world, the Apocalypse undoubtedly occupies this place: it is an unexplained, if not an inexplicable riddle.

But while this is true of some portions of Holy

Writ, the student, once on the right method, will be continually rewarded with single discoveries here and there, of which, to refer to a single case, pointed out to me by a friend, I may appeal to St. Luke, chap. x. 38–42,—the story of Martha and Mary her sister. This story is entirely isolated, having no connection with any thing before or after it, and historically may be said to mean nothing at all; but, symbolically, it was intended to distinguish between worldly cares and prudence, represented by Martha, and religious humility, personated by Mary.

We shall never make any real progress in understanding the Scriptures until we advance so far as to recognize *principles* in the *persons* represented. The seeming historical persons must be regarded as shadows passing before us, to draw our attention to the spiritual truths or principles by which they were, or rather by which they are perpetually cast: for if there is any thing in the Scriptures which is not true to us, and to our time, it can have no importance to us. The value of the Scriptures lies in their application to life; but no application is possible, except a perverted one, when the truth is not recognized; and to recognize the truth, the Scriptures require to be interpreted; yet, not as history, but as parables.

It is true that history has been said to be philosophy teaching by example; but we must observe, that in the actual history of the world, no individual act is precisely and exactly repeated. As Heraclitus said,—"We cannot cross the river twice in the same water."

Events are similar, but never the same; and this is the reason why parable, as a teaching by similitude, is, and always has been, so effective in the world. History itself is most instructive when regarded and interpreted as parable; for then the facts become transformed, as it were, into principles; and it is only when this can be done that history itself becomes valuable. But owing to the difficulty of ascertaining the precise facts of an event, and embodying them in a connected history, a mythical method has always been in use in the world, the work of poets and poetic philosophers, by means of which a high ideal is set up for the imitation of man; and then the aspirations of the soul to reach the ideal, carries it forward and upward to a higher development than might otherwise be attained. Lord Bacon tells us, that poetry doth raise and erect the shows of things to the desires of the mind, whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind to the nature of things.

Therefore, it is certain that no mere history of outward life can teach a high spiritual philosophy; but, for this purpose, a mythical history is necessary, in which the representation of life may be "exalted," as in the gospels, far above an ordinary or historical standard. But such histories must always need interpretation, and the main point is to discover the principle or principles in which the history or histories had their origin. These they do not teach directly: they only suggest them, and this they do to those only who are imbued with the Spirit of Truth, this Spirit having the nature of a mirror in which is reflected all truth.

When CHRIST is represented as saying (John x. 27), My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me, he taught a spiritual truth entirely beyond and above all history, and which no mere history can adequately represent. When the spiritual truth of this is seen, it is not seen as history, but as life. It is easy to write about it, but impossible to describe it. We are constantly surrounded by an "invisible presence," which "is not far from any one of us," and which is perpetually whispering to us,—"come up higher." Those who hear this voice are of its own nature, and they "follow," in the conviction expressed in the language,—I and my Father are one. No child, even of ten years of age, imagines that CHRIST is speaking of sheep when he says, My sheep hear my voice; and when we discover what is meant by sheep in this teaching, we learn at the same time who the shepherd is, and we then know, with a certainty before which even mathematical truth becomes shadowy, that this shepherd has never had a separated historical existence in the universe, being the very life of the universe itself.

Nothing can be more simple than the principle by which these foregoing interpretations have been made; but, at the same time, it must be admitted that the application of the principle requires the utmost caution and prudence. What St. Paul called the Spirit of the Letter, is simply the reason of it—the reason why the letter was given. It may have many names.

It may be said to be the *object* of the Letter; and, in some *sense*, it is the cause of it, and even the father of it—and especially it is the TRUTH of it. A simple case will illustrate what is here intended. Let any one of the commandments of Moses be taken by itself; and if we can discover the reason of the commandment, we then understand the Spirit of it. For example: Moses gives us a commandment, that we shall not bear false witness against our neighbor. Now, if any one feels, within himself, a sufficient reason for such a command, he then understands the principle which prompted it in Moses, and he knows the reason, that is, the Spirit of this Law.

The meaning of the allegory of Abraham and his two wives, Hagar and Sarah, and that Hagar preceded Sarah, Ishmael being older than Isaac, is determined, in the same manner, though it requires more observation and experience in life, to understand it. It signifies that, in the order of the world, the children of men are born under some Law, devised by their parents, or ancestors, for their good. This Law is represented in the allegory by a bond-woman: because, until the reason of the Law becomes known, obedience to it is arbitrarily exacted; and this obedience St. Paul himself calls a bondage. But the Spirit of the Law, that is, the reason of it, is represented by a free-woman: because, when the reason of the Law is understood, obedience to it is no longer felt as a constraint, but it is freely rendered. Hence, St. Paul says, that the Spirit is free; or where the Spirit is,

there is liberty; that is, so soon as any one understands the reasonableness of a Law, the motive to obedience is found in the reason itself; and as that reason, when truly seen, is seen in or through himself, it follows that, in obeying the Law, he really obeys his own nature—and this is freedom. To be under the control or dominion of another, is a bondage, even though for our good, or is felt as such, so long as the reason of the control is not realized; but, to obey one's own nature, is to be free; yet the true nature of man is not expressed in his passions, which bring many into bondage, but through the reason, for the reason is free. GOD himself is said to be infinite Reason, and infinitely free.

Now, GOD'S eternal Laws, so far as they are expressed in the Scriptures, stand over us in our minority in the nature of commands; which we are required to obey, whether we understand them or not: but when we learn that these Laws express the infinite reason, and find the image of the reason in ourselves, we no longer feel constrained to obedience by an external cause, but are moved to it by an internal impulse.

I wish to distinguish here between the laws of GOD and what are called the commandments of GOD. The Laws of GOD are eternal, and are always one and the same: they are never disobeyed, neither can they be. They express the omnipotence of GOD which nothing can resist. What is called a command of GOD is a production by the Law through some prophet or man of GOD, who, knowing the law, announces a command,

the object of which is to secure man in the blessings of obedience to the law, or protect him from the consequences of an attempt to depart from it. To discover the law in or under the command is to discover the reason, that is, the spirit of the command. It is this which discloses the unity of GOD as recognized through the reason.

Until this unity of the reason is discovered, the discovery of which constitutes the true new, or spiritual birth in man, the written commandments are first in order; but when the reason of the commands is discovered, the written commands are no longer of authority, and, like *Hagar*, may be sent into the wilderness; not because they are not good, but because a higher Law has superseded them. They were first in order over the youth, and they remain first in order so long as the youth continues immature, and requires an external guide; but when Isaac is born, that is, when the Spirit, the reason, of the Law is born, the written commands, which had been first in order, become the last—as this very principle is expressed in the Apocalypse.

As Isaac represents the Spirit of the Law in the allegory, he is said to figure CHRIST; but this is said, only because CHRIST himself was set forward at a later day in another allegory or symbolic history, for the purpose of teaching the same thing; for CHRIST also personifies the Spirit of the Law, though by this I mean to include also the prophets, or still, rather the Hebrew sacred writings.

From this view we may see that the true New Testament is not the written Canon, so called;—but that it is forever New, and now stands in the same relation to the whole Bible that CHRIST occupied with respect to the Old Testament before the New was written. The true New Testament is the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, which is forever new in the world, and can never grow old and be a thing of the past. It is the same to-day as when it was declared by CHRIST or reaffirmed by St. Paul. We may be enlightened and assisted to freedom by writings, above all by the writings of the Sacred Scriptures; but we are made free only by the SPIRIT OF TRUTH itself.

When this is rightly apprehended, there will be seen to be different stages of progress. Thus, the youth is necessarily born under the Law; that is, he is under influences, the reason of which he is not supposed to know. This Law in Christian countries is expressed in the sacred volume, including both Testaments as one written whole. In process of time the youth may be supposed to advance so far in the understanding of the Law as to recognize its reasonableness,—for it has proceeded from a reason, the image, or the nature of which, he carries within himself, and which only needs to be unfolded; or, we may say, that the Law has proceeded from "holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," that is, by a SPIRIT OF TRUTH; for a Spirit of Truth is a HOLY SPIRIT.

There is another advance which some few men make, when they discover the unity of the Spirit or

the infinite REASON, which precedes all written Law, and enables its possessor to say—I and my Father are One.

We are not obliged to suppose that this astonishing speech was uttered by a supernatural person. It expresses a truth which some few men in all ages of the world have more or less clearly felt—that the life of man is not an entity separated absolutely from the eternal Light, but that it is included, and has its proper home within it: and in moments of profound contemplation, perhaps even many have felt as if they could say, I and my Father are One. It is the most profound utterance ever made by any human being; and is never made of the body, but only of the soul. It is not a result of visual sight, but of "profound meditation," and is doubtless the most difficult point to understand in Christianity. Nevertheless, the principle by which it is to be understood differs in no respect from what has been already expressed. In order to understand this declaration, the soul must realize in itself a peculiar condition or state, which is difficult to describe, because it is a *unique* state, or said to be so, and is by some likened to the "opening" of a new sense; but whether truly so or not cannot easily be decided.

The truth of the declaration which I am considering—I and my Father are One—as I have said of the laws given by Moses, does not lie in the mere historical fact, that a particular individual made the declaration at a certain historical time, which is now to be regarded as something of the past. It expresses an eternal and

ever-present Truth. But to realize it requires certain conditions, some of which I think I see expressed in the Scriptures, though they are themselves not easily understood. One of these expressions occurs in the elliptical passage in Matt. xvi. 25: Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.

To understand this passage of Scripture, we must consider CHRIST, not as a person, nor merely as the Spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures, personified; but as speaking in the name of the infinite Reason itself. In order to have a name for this, let it be called LIFE itself. Now, this life itself stands over, and, as it were, above the life of man, as a phenomenal being; and the passage in question imports that, before the higher life can be entered, the lower, or phenomenal life, must be "denied." But I will not dwell upon the mode and manner of it, nor will I speculate upon the consequences of it, or attempt to show that possibly it may in some way antedate, as it were, immortality, and become a perfect victory over death.

Another condition, as I suppose, is expressed in the passage where CHRIST says to his disciples (John xvi. 7): It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the COMFORTER will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

The meaning of this passage I suppose to be this: that so long as any one sees the Truth, as externally presented, whether in a personal teacher, or in a writing, he does not see it in the highest sense. So long as

it is recognized upon outward authority, it has not yet received the seal of the Omnipotent. Hence, the personified TRUTH is made to declare that the represented Truth must be removed, to the end that the disciple may finally perceive the self-evidencing nature of TRUTH; and then he will know that, although it was taught by CHRIST, yet his teaching it is not its highest sanction, which must be found in the Truth itself: then only does he receive it, as it is indeed, the truth or word of GOD; and this is to have the truth or CHRIST revealed in one's self.

Another condition, as I suppose, is expressed in the passage where CHRIST says (John viii. 28): When ye have lifted up the SON OF MAN, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

The necessity for this was symbolized by Moses, as alluded to in John iii. 14, 15: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the SON OF MAN be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

This is repeated again in John xii. 32: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

The meaning of these several passages I suppose to be the same, to wit: CHRIST represents a certain LIFE-SPIRIT, which truly is in all men, and in GOD. In order that it may exert its unencumbered influence upon man, he must not merely recognize it in himself, as his own life, but must refer it to GOD as its true life; that is, it must be "exalted" in the man who realizes it; and

when this Spirit is so exalted, its nature is, in some indefinable or mystical manner, to "draw" the whole man unto it. That the "exalted" Son of Man should draw all men unto him means, I say, that the single principle of Truth, when recognized in and for itself, tends, of its own nature, to draw upwards to itself all of the other principles of the spiritual man; that is, they are easily drawn into a willing obedience to, or harmony with, the supreme principle in man, whose unity with God is now supposed to be recognized.

A realization of this unity is possible, as I suppose, under a variety of conditions, or rather through a variety of channels. In the gospel of John, the language expressing it is twice used: I and my Father are One; first in the 10th chapter, without explanation; and then again in the 17th chapter, with such an amplification as shows that the disciples could share it. As it appears in the gospel, I suppose we may say that the language expresses a vision of it through the moral sense. But it is undoubtedly accessible to many men of high art; especially to poets, though I do not include in this class mere versifiers. I consider the author of the fourth gospel the greatest poet the world has ever seen. To realize the amazing speech under consideration, it is necessary, no doubt, that the noumenal nature of man should predominate over the phenomenal; in which condition the limitations imposed by the latter seem to fall away, and the soul contemplates the infinite and the eternal as from its own center. The soul, in this state, may use the language attributed to St. Paul in Acts

xvii. 28: In him we live, and move, and have our being; for this declaration differs in no respect from that in John, except in the form of words used to express it: I and my Father are One. The same sense is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 6, where St. Paul speaks of—One GOD and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and [yet] in you all. In determining the sense of such declarations, we must look beyond the phraseology used to express them, and seek the truth contained in them.

The unity in question is not only seen through the moral and æsthetic sense, but through the intellectual intuitions also; and is especially accessible to men of science. I do not mean mere reasoners, who are often cavilers, and who rank among men of true science, as a mere versifier is related to a poet.

A scientific spirit may at first have its eyes "holden," like the disciples going to Emmaus. Such a spirit commences, perhaps, the study of geometry, and sees nothing particularly divine in it. But as it passes onward, and begins to discover the principles of science in itself, *in the soul*, and to recognize these again in the elements of nature, from which we have the sciences of hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, &c., and discovers the same science in the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies, it finally recognizes but one science, which is above all, through all, and in all; and, perhaps, amazed at the discovery, such a soul exclaims, with fear and trembling, but at the same time with a "solemn joy:" I and my Father are One.

But the very same truth appears no less in the legal profession. Here also the eyes of the student may for a long time perhaps be "holden," while he laboriously turns the pages of whole volumes of statutory laws; but, finally, if he has a true "call" to the profession, he begins to discern a principle in the enactments of the Legislators of the world; and at length, in the seeming chaos of what is called the common law, the same principle is seen to have presided over the decisions of the higher courts: and then, also, with a trembling delight, the true jurist loses his individuality in what he recognizes as the perfection of Reason, and is ready to exclaim, I and my Father are One.

At length, in this direction, we discover in what sense a great Artist of our own age, but recently passed away, has left his judgment on record in these remarkable words:—For the narrow mind, whatever he attempts is still a trade; for the higher an art; and the highest, in doing one thing, does all; or, to speak less paradoxically, in the one thing which he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all that is done rightly.

I might here insist upon the power of music, or harmony in the soul, to awaken a sense of the universal harmony, which is no other than the same spirit of truth; which, it may be, the man of science sees through the intellect, and calls GOD a Geometrician, while the jurist sees the spirit through the law, and calls him the perfection of Reason:—though the discovery which is most universal, and comes latest in

life, is to see in all of these directions but one and the same spirit; which, by this very universality, loses its specific name, and the soul that finds it joyfully loses itself, — feeling itself swallowed up in the glory of GOD.

It is possible that some experience assimilated to this may explain St. Paul's feelings, as expressed in the first verses of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians; where we read that he counted all things as loss, which could by possibility disturb or impair his fruition or possession of CHRIST JESUS. When the Truth is pre-eminently realized, it inspires a love for itself to which no ordinary human affection bears any comparison. In this Truth the Soul sees its true good; and loves it, not because it is good, but because it is divine. This divine Truth shines in the Scriptures; or, as some have said, it burns in the sacred writings like the fire in the bush at the Holy Mount, without consuming them.

Notwithstanding my repeated reference to what I call the representative character of CHRIST, the point I am aiming at in all this, is not a denial of the historical, except in behalf of the Spirit, and to maintain the doctrine of an unalterable providence, or order, in the course of the world; but my desire is to set forth what is called the Spiritual, though I dislike this word, because of its indefiniteness. The word *Spirit* is used in a multitude of ways in the Scriptures; so many, that it would require a whole page, or more, to enumerate

them. We read of the Spirit of CHRIST, and of the Spirit of Antichrist; of the Spirit of adoption, of bondage, of burning, of divination, of wisdom, &c., &c.

In view of the various forms of using the word Spirit, who shall undertake to define it? In many of the expressions, it is plain that *Spirit* is a mere synonym for the thing of which it is spoken. Thus, the *Spirit* of Wisdom is Wisdom itself; and so we may say that the Spirit of Truth is Truth itself, unless we say that the love of Truth is the Spirit of Truth, for Love is a Spirit; and then the love of the world will define the Spirit of the world; and now, in these two expressions, the love of the World and the love of the Truth, I think I see the ADAM and the CHRIST which every man carries within him. To find the TRUTH, and to love it, seems to me to be what is meant by the love of CHRIST; not a person of the past, but an ever-present Spirit, called by CHRIST himself the SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

This Spirit, which was in CHRIST, was also, as St. Paul claims, in the Apostle himself; and could be received by others, and become in them the hope of glory (Col. i. 27); and as many as were led by this Spirit, were the sons of GOD (Rom. viii. 14);—by which we may understand that CHRIST, as a person, was not the only son of GOD; but, he was that only Son, because the Spirit in him had been pre-eminently manifested; that Spirit, which St. Paul called the Son of GOD in himself, and in all those who received or were led by the same Spirit in themselves. The language so

often used in Scripture, especially in the Gospel of John, of seeing CHRIST and seeing the FATHER, must be understood as metaphorical. To know the Spirit of Truth is to know CHRIST, and to know CHRIST, as in John xiv. 7, is to know the FATHER; and this, again, but in a metaphorical sense, is to see the FATHER; for Moses has told us that no man shall see GOD'S face and live. The Bible must be interpreted consistently with itself; therefore, if Moses has given us the true expression, then the language in contradiction to it in the New Testament, as also in the Old, must be understood metaphorically. CHRIST, also, tells the woman at the well that GOD is spirit; but spirit is certainly invisible to the sense of sight, and, as St. Paul says, can only be discerned spiritually.

The importance of this question does not lie in the fact, that a person appeared with this Spirit in Jerusalem, at a particular time, and was put to death by the Priesthood and Pharisees of the Jewish superstition; but it lies in the reality of the Spirit itself, the existence of which is the prior condition by which alone it is possible for any man to possess it. This Spirit is seen in the Scriptures; and, then, many suppose it is because of the Scriptures; whereas, others see in them a fruit of this Spirit. And it is the same with regard to CHRIST, as a person: some see the Spirit in him, while others see him in the Spirit. Let this distinction be once clearly understood, and it will remove many difficulties in studying the Scriptures.

SECTION VIII.

I now return to the Old Testament, and will point out a single element of its Truth, having already explained the signification of the allegory of Abraham and his two wives. As the hint for the explanation of this allegory is found in St. Paul's Epistles, so do I find another most important hint in the writings of the same Apostle.

The passages I shall cite must be considered in view of, or under the light of the principle that the Spirit of the Law is not a thing of the past, but an ever-living present Spirit.

I refer to Deut. xxx. 11–14, to wit:

11. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?

13. Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?

14. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

In the 10th chapter of Romans, we have St. Paul's interpretation of the above, in these words:

Verse 4. For CHRIST is the end of the Law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.

5. For *Moses* describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is [explains St. Paul], to bring down CHRIST *from above:*)

7. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is [explains St. Paul], to bring up CHRIST again from the dead.)

8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

Here we see, that CHRIST is called the end [that is, the object] of the Law; and I would have this declaration compared with Gal. iii. 24, where the Law is likened to a schoolmaster, to bring us unto CHRIST; with the addition, that after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (verse 25). For we must discover what it was that St. Paul considered as giving him the freedom he preached. We see already, that Faith is a synonym for CHRIST, and this is again and again called the Spirit, that frees those who have it from what St. Paul called the bondage of the law.

Now, the Spirit here referred to is especially pointed out in the *3d chapter of the 2d Epistle to the Co-*

rinthians, as a writing (verse 3) not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living GOD; not in tables of stone [nor in books, we may add], but in fleshy tables of the heart. It is of this Spirit that St. Paul calls himself the minister—a minister of the New Testament [the gospel, not yet written]; not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life (verse 6).

Having this Spirit, St. Paul assumes to "use great plainness of speech" (verse 12), and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face (verse 13). That is, Moses, according to St. Paul, wrote in figures and symbols; for here we must see the veil he speaks of. This veil he himself figuratively puts over the hearts of the Jews—as it is at this day over the hearts of many Christians. Their minds were blinded, he says, for until this day (verse 14) remaineth the same veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament; and then he adds that the veil is done away in CHRIST. But he is manifestly not speaking of a personal CHRIST, for he says, referring to the Jews:

Verse 15. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

16. Nevertheless, when it [the heart] shall turn to the LORD, the veil shall be taken away.

And then he adds the important explanation, as the key to the whole doctrine (verse 17): Now the LORD is that SPIRIT: and where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there is Liberty.

Now, this Spirit, of which St. Paul speaks, he has described as writing the Law on the fleshy tables of

the heart; and thus, when the heart looks upon it, and reads what is written there, the veil over the face (over the writings of Moses) is taken away; that is, the reason or the spirit of the Mosaic dispensation is understood. This Spirit he calls the LORD, that is CHRIST in the Spirit, or the SPIRIT OF CHRIST; and he interprets Moses, as we see in the Epistle to the Romans, as referring to the same CHRIST, as being in the hearts even of those to whom he nevertheless gave a written Law.

It is plain, therefore, that St. Paul looked upon the heart as the seat of CHRIST—as the place where he is to be found, and not in a person, much less in a writing. It is true, he speaks of a person in other portions of his writings: but he tells us also of babes in the faith, unable to bear strong meat; he confesses that he made himself all things to all men, in order to gain some to GOD. He tells us that he speaks after the manner of men, because of their infirmities, &c. It is no fault of ours, in modern times, if we find in St. Paul's writings some varieties that cannot readily be harmonized.

The explanation of this double mode of referring to CHRIST, by St. Paul—in Romans as a minister to the Jews, and in other places as the Spirit—seems to be, that, JESUS as a man preached the true Spirit to the Jews; which St. Paul himself recognized, also, and preached to the Gentiles. This Spirit St. Paul calls CHRIST, for no other reason than because CHRIST was "filled" with it and had preached it, not that CHRIST was that Spirit in any exclusive sense, for he expressly

calls this Spirit in himself by the name of CHRIST. This CHRIST he preached, as a Spirit, to those who could "bear" it, that is, to those who could understand it; but to others he referred the doctrine to the person who had eminently preached and illustrated it in his life. But to return to the Law.

In Exodus (chap. xxiii.) there are many commands about entering the Land of Promise, in all of which there is nothing but pure symbolism, having reference to the moral and spiritual well-being of man, who is in Scripture often called the earth, the land, the world, Jerusalem, &c. This is the Land that is sometimes said to be dry and *parched*, and sometimes *clothed* with fresh verdure—according to the state of the soul. It contains many mountains, including Mount Sinai, and what is much more, it contains the Holy Mount—the very seat of the Law in the Heart which St. Paul calls CHRIST.

In this 23d chapter of Exodus the Spirit, the law in the heart, is called an ANGEL.

Verse 20. Behold, I send an *Angel* before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place [this was not a geographical place] which I have prepared.

21. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. [That is, GOD'S name; for Moses speaks in the name of GOD.]

22. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak [in or through the *Angel*]; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

If we can bring ourselves to look with a very small share of reasonable freedom upon those ancient writings, and if we consider such passages as the above as addressed to us—and if not addressed to us, what have we to do with them?—then, I do not see how we can fail to see in the *Angel* here spoken of, the *Law* in the heart appealed to by Moses in the 30th chapter of Deut., which Law, we should remember, St. Paul calls CHRIST (Romans x.).

I will now venture upon the one promise, which ever has deluded, and is likely still to delude, those who rest in the letter, and do not see that a genuine prophecy is both prospective and retrospective, and does not refer to an event in time, but to a principle operative throughout all time. The promise of the coming of CHRIST is not the promise of a historical person, but a promise which is now in fulfillment, as it was, indeed, before Abraham.

It is true that several prophecies are appealed to, as fulfilled in the person of CHRIST; but the writers of the gospels, whom I suppose to have been Essenes, expressly designed to figure in CHRIST the life or soul of the sacred Scriptures; and it was therefore within their design to represent him as the fulfillment of the

Scriptures. Hence the writers frequently say—this was done, that such or such a Scripture might be fulfilled: but this was precisely what they set out to represent. As the "Holy One of Israel" is indeed the principal subject of the Old Testament, CHRIST is appropriately made to say (John v. 39)—Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. This is only a mode by which a mythical person is made to indicate his representative character, and that he represents the Spirit of the Scriptures, which, because it is a Spirit, has never been physically visible in the world, except indeed as all men are images of it, who live according to the SPIRIT OF TRUTH. Hence, a recent writer very truly and beautifully says, that the life of every truly good man is an Evangel.

The so-called prophecy, to which I will now refer, is in Deut. xviii. 15, to wit:

The LORD thy GOD will raise up unto thee a *prophet* from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

Many, who have not been disposed to regard CHRIST as sufficiently like unto Moses to be the promised Prophet, have urged that this prophecy was fulfilled in Joshua. But, in truth, neither Joshua nor CHRIST, as historical persons, were like unto Moses; but if we look upon Moses as a Law-giver, founding his Laws upon the principle of all moral Law in the heart, the Spirit that St. Paul calls CHRIST, we shall easily understand the meaning of this promise of a Prophet like

unto Moses. It is a prophetic declaration for all time, that in all men there shall arise a principle of Truth in the heart; the "brethren" spoken of being the entire family of the spiritual nature of man, including the thoughts, affections, and passions of the whole man, in the "midst" of which, or whom, there is a certain Spirit of Truth which should rule with the authority of GOD. This is the "Angel" (Ex. xxiii. 20), whose voice is to be obeyed, because GOD's "name" is in him; and this is also the word in the heart (Deut. xxx. 14) which St. Paul calls CHRIST (Rom. x. 6, 7), and which he also calls the Spirit that writes the Law on the heart (2 Cor. iii.).

This Spirit is the soul or life of the sacred Scriptures, personified by the Essenes as teaching the doctrine of the Spirit, as the grand secret of the brotherhood who were schooled in this doctrine, but who were, at the same time, under the most solemn oath not to speak or write of it openly.

Here we must see the reason of the *veil* over the New Testament, or over the gospels (and the Revelation); for the gospels are grand parables, containing many subordinate parables, in the form of miracles, and other representations. But St. Paul was a convert from among the Pharisees, and discovered the truth of the Spirit (under the Letter), not by the teaching of man, and was astonishingly awakened into life by the discovery, through what has been generally regarded as an inspiration: a word of indefinite signification; for all clear and distinct conceptions of

Truth come under this name. No one perceives the truth, even of a geometric relation, but by what may be called an inspiration. It is not of the will of man that progress is made in scientific discoveries, but these are all developments of Truth in the soul, the great Ocean whence living fishes are drawn.

Inspired truth is that truth which authoritates itself in the soul, and makes itself respected independently of the authority of man. Under the influence of this sort of truth men are enabled to "walk on the waters," and are under no necessity for conferring with flesh and blood (Gal. i. 16)—no, not even with the apostles (verse 17), and still less with the writings they have left us, except as they are instrumentally useful.

As I have so much to say of Truth, I may as well declare, in a few words, that I recognize, in common with many others, two kinds of Truth; one, which carries with itself its own evidence of itself. This is the Truth I am chiefly concerned with; for this is the rock on which a true religion is built, and which the gates of hell, whatever they are, shall not prevail against. Another kind of Truth admits only of what is sometimes called empiric evidence; and this includes all historical relations, which are always more or less open to question and discussion. One of these classes of Truths is referred to the reason, and the other to the understanding; and, however difficult it may be to define their respective limits, the two classes may generally be distinguished, though, in fact, ultimately, in

the highest Truth, the two coalesce; for Truth, in itself, is an absolute unity, or, it may better be expressed by saying that Truth is always in harmony with itself.

Some idea of these two kinds of Truth, or rather of knowledge, and of their unity also, may be seen in the following simple example, or illustration:

A geometrician knows, by a process proceeding from intuition, that the three angles of every plain triangle are equal to the two right-angles. The truth of this he cannot doubt, if he would; nor is it possible for any one to infuse a doubt about it into his mind. With regard to the truth of this proposition, there is no debatable ground left in the mind of a man of science, and yet he may never have measured the angles of any one triangle whatever. This, then, is a Truth of the reason.

But now, one who is not acquainted with the processes of a geometric mind, may approximate this sort of knowledge empirically, or experimentally, by means of mathematical instruments; that is, he may measure one, two, three, or thirty triangles, and finding that every variety, when measured, shows a similar result, he may infer the principle, that the three angles of every possible triangle are equal to two right-angles; but, from the nature of the evidence in this case, it is impossible for any one absolutely to know, beyond a peradventure, but that there may be some one triangle, not yet experimented upon, which might measure, either more or less than two right-angles.

The difference between these two kinds of cognition, or knowing, is seen everywhere among men, in almost every branch of knowledge. One man knows, when he affirms anything, while another only "opines" about it.

That these two kinds of knowledge ultimately unite, or tend to unity, is known only to the reason:—the understanding, as it is called, never attains to it. The unity of science with experimental knowledge, or with facts to be sensuously observed, has never been more remarkably declared than by Plato in the Laws, where he asserts the unity of science, or intellect, with the motions of the heavenly bodies in the solar system, which had not yet, in his day, been brought within the field of science. The passage is so remarkable that I will recite it. It is a portion of an argument in proof of the existence of God:

"If the whole path of heaven, and at the same time the progressive movement of all it contains, possess a nature similar to the motion, and circulation, and reasonings of the mind, and proceed in a manner allied to them [this being implied in the argument], it is evident that we must say, that the most excellent Soul [God] takes care of the whole world, and leads it along a path of that very kind." That is, nature and intellect, according to Plato, are in perfect accord or harmony.

Plato saw the *unity* of the noumenon and the phenomenon, but he did not know at what period in the history of learning this unity would appear or be

demonstrated in the science of astronomy. How would he have rejoiced, if he could have seen science, as in our day, entering into mineralogy, and even into botany, and showing, in the most astonishing details, that GOD'S infinite reason presides, indeed, over the fabrication of every crystal, and no less in the unfolding of the very leaves and the blossoms of the lily! He would have recognized a clear and distinct meaning in the words (Matt. x. 29): Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

The difference between the influences of the two kinds of knowledge referred to, upon different men, is remarkable; for it is not usual for one who takes reason for his stand-point, to enter with heat and zeal into controversies; because, upon knowledge attained empirically, or that which admits of empirical evidence only, he knows in advance that a "sediment of doubt" always remains, after the most careful examination; as in nearly all historical questions: while, on questions whose solution comes within the pale of reason, he knows, no less in advance, that in the end reason must, of necessity, decide the controversy. Not so with the empiric man. His empiric conviction takes the place, in his mind, of a conviction of reason, and he does not understand why that which seems so certain to him is not equally certain to all other men; and he hopes to make it so by the force of earnest asseverations; while the real truth, in both cases, is one immutable thing, in no wise affected by the misunderstandings of men.

Truth has been the object of the study of man ever since his history has been recorded; and it is certainly remarkable that, from the earliest time, the most ingenious writers have shrouded their speculations and inquiries about it in a species of writing admitting a double sense. This may not be very evident to one whose attention has never been directed or awakened to the fact, but the fact itself is indisputable. In the ancient schools of philosophy, esoteric writing was almost always resorted to—as learned scholars of modern times are beginning to see and acknowledge. The *water* of Thales, the *air* and the *fire* of other philosophers, are now well known to have been used as mere symbols for the invisible underlying essence or *sub-stans* of all things, which, because it is invisible, must be inquired into by means of symbolic language. Plato's writings are known to have a double sense in almost every part of them, and Aristotle had his private lectures for select scholars, which he said the public could not understand. Even Xenophon has given the world some remarkable specimens of double writing, which, I observe, his recent English translator (Bohn's edition), has wholly failed to understand, as may be seen by his foot notes. I refer to two Essays in particular, one on the Taming and Training of Horses, and the other on Hunting. In these two ingenious Essays Xenophon has given many useful rules for the treatment and management of horses, and also for training dogs for hunting, and the general reader is apt to see nothing else in them. But, in fact, the object of the first of these Es-

says is to teach, under cover of breaking and taming the horse, the importance and necessity of subduing the passions, so that, instead of being our imperious and tyrannical masters, they shall be our obedient and submissive servants.

In the second Essay, that on Hunting, Xenophon has given us a treatise on the pursuit of Truth, under the figure of hunting the hare. The dogs he describes are men, having various characteristics, the description of which has reference to their perseverance and skill in pursuit of Truth, the Truth being represented by the hare; the author, by the same means, indicating the inaptitude of some men for this noblest of all hunting. I am confident that no ingenious scholar of ripe age, with the above hints in view, can fail to perceive the true object of the Essays; or, if he should, I should feel much disposed to exclaim: Know ye not these parables? and how then will ye know all parables? (Mark iv. 13.)

It must be observed, however, that in this species of writing, the real matter intended to be taught is always mingled with much that belongs merely to the external form, often that of a novel, as may be seen in Wilhelm Meister, though sometimes a seeming history, in which many portions are introduced for no other purpose than to preserve the continuity of the story, and give to it the appearance of external reality. To assign or attempt to assign, therefore, an arcane meaning to every part of such relations, would be to overshoot the mark, and expose one's self to the cheats

of an exuberant or wandering imagination. No direct rule can be given as a protection against such an error, other than that of "abiding in the simplicity and truth of nature."

There is a vast deal more of Hermetic writing in the world than a careless student can know anything about. The titles of many essays, and indeed of whole volumes, even in modern times, are often purposely selected with a view to throw the general reader off from the true purpose of the writer. Thus, Bishop Berkeley's Essay on Tar Water, is in fact an essay on the Spirit of the universe. It is a pure piece of Hermeticism, and the literature of the Middle Ages is filled with that sort of writing.

The reasons for this species of writing are various, some of which I have stated elsewhere, and will therefore not dwell upon them here. Whatever may be thought of those reasons, the fact is certain, that some of the most profound and ingenious writings the world is in possession of, are of the Hermetic class, and admit of a double sense. They carry one meaning for the outward eye, or outward senses; but they have another for those who come into a right relation to it—which is necessary before they can be appreciated. It is to no purpose to complain of this. It is better to give time and attention towards a discovery of the hidden sense, which, when known, may explain why so singular a mode of writing has been so generally adopted; I mean in the treatment of the one subject, that of Truth. Of one thing, however, we may be perfectly

certain; that, the only protection any one can have against error is in the truth itself; to which, therefore, every one should fly as to the only safe and secure resting-place.

I will now return to my more immediate subject.

SECTION IX.

It will be observed that I speak of CHRIST as a representative being, not as a person, the importance of the person being wholly lost in the personification. The writers of the gospels, as I consider, took great latitude in their mythical histories, always intending, however, to teach the truth, or herald good tidings, which, indeed, is the meaning of the word gospel. CHRIST, therefore, in some places represents the sacred books; as, in all of those passages in which two things are referred to as of primary importance, under the symbols of flesh and blood, and the like. This character may appear in many other places, which a little observation might bring to light. In the 13th chapter of Matthew, for example, a very extraordinary reason is given why CHRIST "did not many mighty works" (v. 58) "in his own country" (v. 54)—that it was "because of their unbelief." If CHRIST is regarded as a person, and a person with supernatural power, it is inconceivable how he could be impeded in the exercise of it by the unbelief of those around him; and, if sent to them as a supernatural teacher, the want of belief might seem to be the very reason why the power

should be exercised, to overcome it. Those who believed had no need of such evidence of his character as miracles are supposed to furnish, and yet, it would appear, that miracles were wrought chiefly among those who had no unbelief to overcome. In Mark vi. 5, 6, it is expressly said, that "he could do no mighty work;"—not that he did not, but could not—"and he marvelled at their unbelief."

If, in these passages, we consider CHRIST as representing the Scriptures, the reason why unbelief impeded the exercise of his power is very plain; for, without faith in the Scriptures they are indeed bereft of power. This view, I will remark, may perhaps assist us in understanding why so much importance is attached to faith, in the sense of a belief in the Scriptures. CHRIST, as a principle, might also be represented as unable to do any wonders among those who had no belief in the principle; because this want of belief must render the principle inoperative, as if it were dead: but here, also, if CHRIST was a person, the reason for not exercising his power is wholly insufficient, if not ridiculous; whereas these passages have a plain signification on the supposition of a mythical character, whether this character refers to the Scriptures, or to a spiritual principle; and this should be borne in mind in determining the sense of many other passages. Even the declaration, I am the way, the truth, and the life, may be understood as expressing the precise opinion of a Jew in respect to the Scriptures: but it is even more true of

the divine principle from which the Scriptures themselves were supposed to have proceeded.

The initiated, for whose edification, as I suppose, the gospels were written, being familiar with the principles upon which they were written, could have had no serious difficulty in understanding why CHRIST could "do no wonders" among unbelievers, and might have readily interpreted many other portions of the gospels which, to us, in our time, cannot but appear dark and mysterious.

But while I suppose that CHRIST, in some cases, represents the Scriptures, it is quite clear that in others he speaks in the name of some spiritual principle, and in order to understand and appreciate his teaching, it is necessary to discover what principle animated him, —I say *him*, but I mean the gospel writers; for, whatever we may imagine to have been the personal life of CHRIST, we owe the gospels to his four historians, writing, as I conceive, with a large freedom, the freedom of the Spirit, each writer making the life of CHRIST only the vehicle for representing his own opinions, or those of his sect, either of the Scriptures (of their truth and influence), or of certain spiritual principles active in the soul of man.

If we consider CHRIST as personating the SPIRIT, Life, Soul, Reason, or Wisdom of the Sacred Scriptures among the Jews, and attend to his teaching, we may understand something of the secret wisdom of the Essenes: but we ought not to suppose that this can be

easily done, for they were the spiritual portion of the Jews, living in seclusion and leading a contemplative and studious life, under the most strict discipline of prayer and worship. These were the sages of the nation; grave men, experienced in thought and in life. They were the "brethren" so often referred to in the New Testament, and were no doubt pointed at in Matt. xviii. 17;—tell it to the Church: for, except the Jewish Church, to which CHRIST would not have appealed, we know of no other church where these words were used, save that of the Essenes.

CHRIST, from this point of view, may be recognized as teaching *the doctrine of himself*, the doctrine of the Holy One of Israel; that is, the doctrine of the Law in the heart, the true CHRIST, as St. Paul calls the SPIRIT:—But this is the KINGDOM OF GOD. And here we may understand the parable, comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to *a treasure hid in a field;* for this is the one thing needful, the Law in the heart; the field being ourselves: and to possess a "right spirit" in the heart is of so much importance as to outweigh all else that "a man may have" (Matt. xiii. 44). We may here refer to the prayer of David—Create in me a clean heart, O GOD; and renew a right spirit in me—as expressing the aspiration of a soul hungering and thirsting after righteousness. This, when truly understood, will be seen to manifest CHRIST in David seeking CHRIST in the Spirit. In modern phraseology, it is CHRIST coming to a recognition of himself in the soul. But it is said to be the work of the Spirit, and is "not

of the will of man." No man wills himself into a disposition to hunger and thirst after righteousness; but the presence of such a disposition (such a *grace*) impels the will itself to search, or pray, for a right spirit; but the disposition so to search and pray is itself a right spirit, and is so recognized when it sees itself in itself.

The disposition to seek for and appropriate the Truth is similarly a right disposition, and stands related to the Truth itself as an effect to its cause, and then becomes a cause in its turn, tending to manifest its nature as certainly as a tree tends to manifest in its fruit the nature of its seed. This is the ground of the promise: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled:—filled with what? with that which is as the fruit of a tree whose seed is of like nature; and it is the same for all of the beatitudes. There being several of them, and each carrying a particular blessing, according to the nature of each state of the soul described, may serve to illustrate the passage in John xiv. 2: In my Father's house are many mansions, &c.: for we must understand that Heaven is not a place, but a state of the soul. To recognize or acknowledge the truth of the Beatitudes as they are written, and said to be revealed, and to look for a mysterious fulfillment in some place above the skies, is to see them in the *Flesh;* but to perceive their truth, indeed, is to see the Spirit or the Reason of the Letter. In the one case, the knowledge is of the senses, and is outward; in the other, it is that of the reason, and is inward or spiritual. In the one case, the knowledge rests

upon authority, and may be brought into doubt, and is in danger of being disregarded; in the other, the certainty of the knowledge is the certainty of the reason itself, and can neither be denied nor disregarded.

Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to *a goodly pearl of great price*—in order to purchase which a merchant "sold all he had." Now, this *pearl* is the *treasure* hid in the field;—a right Spirit, a Spirit of rectitude, that is, of righteousness; and righteousness and CHRIST are one and the same—a spirit of life, or of living, and not a person in the past.

Heaven is also compared to *a grain of mustard-seed*, the smallest of seeds; and it is represented as a growth. St. Paul speaks of it as a growth. He tells us of CHRIST being "formed" in us; of "babes in the faith;" of those who can bear "milk" only, and not "strong meat:"—he tells us also of an *heir*, who has his period of minority, though born to be the Lord of all (Gal. iv. 1, and other places).

Again: the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to *leaven* hid in three measures of meal. Why *three* measures? Here we may see an allusion to the triple nature of man, body, soul, and spirit (which is also figured on the cross). Truth is the *leaven* which works and works in the three measures of meal (when it once finds entrance) until the whole man is brought to the Truth, and sees nothing in the universe so majestic, nothing so lovely, and nothing so holy.

If now we ask what that SPIRIT is, specifically, which

St. Paul called CHRIST or the Lord, we must examine the *field* where the *treasure* was hid; and we must seek the *pearl* in that *field;* and we must find it with the *mustard-seed* and the *leaven*, for these are only other names for it, or characteristics of it.

And what is more, we must understand also, that this *treasure*, this *pearl*, this *leaven*, this *mustard-seed*, is the *Angel* spoken of in Ex. xxiii. 20; and it is the *Prophet* promised in Deut. xviii. 15; and it is no less the *Law in the heart* of which Moses speaks in Deut. xxx. 14: and this is what St. Paul calls CHRIST (Rom. x. 6, 7), which he also calls the Spirit that writes the Law in the heart, and says (2 Cor. iii. 17): Now, the LORD is that SPIRIT.

Nothing can be more evident from all this than that the Spirit, which is the subject of all these allusions, is not only some one thing, represented in a variety of ways, but it is something proper to the nature of man, or which he is capable of receiving, this capability itself having originally proceeded from the Spirit, as Life—for the circle must complete itself. This Spirit must be of such a nature as to be entitled to pre-eminence among all of its spiritual "brethren"—all of the thoughts, affections, passions, &c., of which man is capable; for these are the "brethren" among which is to arise the "Prophet," and the Prophet is also the "Angel," whose "voice" is to be "obeyed," because GOD'S "name" is in him; and by GOD'S name, we are to understand his authority.

At this point or stage of the inquiry we must not

forget the important declaration of CHRIST, recorded in Luke xvii. 20, 21: The Kingdom of GOD cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo, there! for, behold, the Kingdom of GOD is within you. In vain, then, shall we look for it beyond ourselves.

In order to reach a profound view of the nature of this Spirit, I am strongly tempted to suggest, as the best mode of attaining it, that the student should take the above allusions to it into his closet, and, shutting the door, ask for light on the subject; for what is the purport of the advice to pray in one's closet with the door shut? When we become familiar with the figurative and symbolic language of the gospels, we may easily see that this admonition requires us to enter the secret chambers of the heart, its innermost closet: and, in order to discover its precise teaching, we must shut the door; that is, we must cease controversial discussions and "vain jangling about the letter." In short, we must stop disputing, which, for the most part, is busied about words, in order that we may the more clearly understand the nature of things. But as the result to which any one may attain through this process is likely to be a purely personal state, of which it may be difficult to give any very intelligible account to another, I would ask attention to what may be called a somewhat more practical method as an intermediate step, which is not so difficult to explain.

But, even in attempting to determine practically

what this Spirit is, there may be a difficulty analogous, perhaps, to that of the physiologist in designating, in the physiological structure of man, any one organ whose function is entitled to predominate over all other organs. This difficulty in physiology arises from the fact that the organs are so connected together and mutually interdependent upon each other, that if any one is deranged, all of the rest are liable to be disordered; but, on the other hand, if any one is perfect, and can be maintained in its integrity, the whole system may be accommodated to it. Something similar to this may be said of the moral and spiritual organization of man.

Admitting this difficulty to the fullest extent, yet, as a physician may feel tolerably sure of the health of his subject, if he can maintain an equable, or normal action, say, of the heart, so, in the moral system, the Therapeut (St. Luke probably being one, and thence called a physician) may feel no less sure of the welfare of his moral subject, if he can be certain of a right action of the heart in a moral sense; although it must be admitted, at the same time, that the heart may not be right if the head is wandering, and no less admitted that if the head be right, the heart will not go astray.

After considering all of the difficulties in the case, I find myself disposed to point to one thing which, if not entitled, of itself, to pre-eminence in the moral subject, is of such a nature that it cannot be neglected without manifest danger to the whole system; and this, therefore, I would select as so far coming to the surface that

it admits of being named: and if it is not the prophet, the angel itself, yet it may serve as an index pointing the way to it.

Now, this principle can be no other than that which is popularly known under the name of the Conscience; the importance of which, in the spiritual constitution of man, cannot be over-estimated; though its perfect action may require a right action of the reason also, the true Spirit being the harmonious action of both: a phraseology easily used, the meaning of which, however, has never been defined. Still, I repeat, that if I felt required to name one thing as the proper Spirit to commence with, in seeking that perfection of man, which has been the object of all the professed revelations that have ever been made in the world, I should undoubtedly select the Conscience, as being known to all men, and accessible to all well-disposed men; whereas, what we call reason "is always the acquisition of a few."

Experienced life always looks upon a conscientious youth with approbation and hope, whereas the want of a spirit of rectitude is full of fear and danger. We know, for we may easily see, that this Spirit is often manifested in children even before the power of speech is acquired, and hence it has been called the first-born among many brethren. We know, also, that it never wholly leaves any man while life lasts, and is often the sole element to be distinguished in the agonies of death. This principle is the sole authority for the golden rule,

as it is called, requiring us to do unto others as we would that others should do unto us; that is, it affirms the Law of equal justice, without regard to persons. Its modes of action are yet infinitely various; now approving, now condemning, yet always one thing in itself, affirming the everlasting Truth: in principle always right; in practice often wandering, until instructed by experience and made perfect through trial, and often through affliction: when, finally—Men are no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but they speak the truth in love, and grow up in him in all things which is the head, even CHRIST (Ephes. iv. 14, 15.)

Why do we generally look upon conscientious members of the Church with regard, confidence, and trust? It is not simply because they are members of this or that church, or of this or that denomination, but it is because membership implies conscientiousness; and one must be a fanatic of the lowest class not to respect a conscientious follower of the Crescent, for the same reason. The conscience, as such, does not carry a man into communion with any particular denomination. If it did, there would be but one denomination in the world. On the other hand, no one, except a willful deceiver can join in any communion whatever, except under the sanction, or impulse of the conscience. Whatever other feeling, or principle, may be present in

the decision any one makes on the question of uniting with a society of GOD'S worshipers, a dictate of the conscience is indispensable; otherwise there is not only no real membership, but the intruder, perhaps, fatally drinks damnation to his soul. But there are so many "unworthy" members, that the mere fact of membership alone is not always taken as decisive evidence of fidelity; and therefore it is that, in the current intercourse of the world, men look to life, and not profession, for evidence of a trustworthy character. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

We may test the value of this principle, the Conscience, after the manner by which Cicero proposed to ascertain the best system among the ancient sects of philosophy. Every sect placed its own system first; but the second choice of almost every sect was the Academic; which, therefore, in all probability, was the best of all. Now, it is certain that whatever principle any sect, of either philosophy or religion, set forward prominently as "most surely" to be depended upon, there is not one of them that can dispense with the Conscience.

Not only do we see that no system of ither religion or philosophy, where these are systematized at all, can dispense with the conscience as a principle of moral order; but it is worthy of especial remark, that whenever writers on moral and religious subjects, momentarily forget their denominational connections, they im-

mediately give evidence of their recognition of the law in the heart, of which I have been speaking. Even when writing with a technical eye upon some dogmatic system, they often speak of a DUTY, known to be such by a decision of the Conscience, as a duty to CHRIST or to GOD; without apparently seeing that the prophets said no more, and had no other ground for what they did say, on questions of duty. In the same manner, they use a variety of expressions, which, in reality, mean the same thing; such as *obligation*, *responsibility*, *consciousness of rectitude*, *righteousness*; or, they talk of the *sacred fact of obligation*, or, *the sanctity of God's holy law in the heart*, &c.; all of which expressions have their root in the conscience, and nowhere else.

St. Paul saw the whole law in love to man (Rom. xiii. 8), or in loving one's neighbor as one's self (verse 9); not thinking it necessary to add, the duty of loving GOD; because, no one can love GOD and hate his neighbor, or love his neighbor without loving GOD, which is illustrated in Matt. xxv. 31–46: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Why was this language used? Because, the "me" in this passage is humanity personified, not an individual person.

But, to love one's neighbor, that is, to love our brethren, and to "do unto others as we would that others should do unto us," is the natural dictate of an unbiased conscience; and this is what is enforced, or sought to be enforced, by the general conscience of

man, acting through municipal and criminal laws, as against an individual in whom it has been turned aside from its office by the temporary predominance or seduction of other principles.

That this principle was the SPIRIT dominant in St. Paul, and that which he called CHRIST in his interpretation of Deut. xxx. 11–14, Rom. x. 4–8, we might be satisfied by the single verse (2 Cor. i. 12): For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience [N. B.], that in simplicity and godly [that is, perfect] sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but with the grace of GOD, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. That which is here called the grace of GOD is no other than the conscience piously referred to its true source. St. Paul's "joy" was in the testimony of a good conscience; the possession of which he acknowledged as a grace from GOD. This had governed him in his conversation, that is, in his intercourse with the world, and toward the Corinthians, to whom his epistle was directed. His guiding principle of life was the conscience, and not the dictates of what he calls fleshly wisdom; which means the wisdom of the *Letter*, the traditions of men, to which St. Paul was a species of Infidel. He claimed to be of the true circumcision, not because he was of the stock of Abraham, but because he worshiped GOD in the Spirit, and rejoiced in CHRIST JESUS (Phil. iii. 3), and had no confidence in the flesh (*same verse*), where the meaning of the word flesh is clearly explained, as I have already pointed out, by the verses immediately

following the use of the word. To obey the conscience, calling it a grace from God, was first in order with St. Paul; and this, too, independently of "fleshly wisdom," that is, the wisdom of Mosaic Law; which, under the name of the Letter, he says killeth.

If I am particular in pointing this out, it is because I am "fully persuaded" that the point of view I am endeavoring to present is truly Pauline. St. Paul was an infidel in his day; not indeed to the Law, lawfully used, as he said (1 Tim. i. 8); but to the Letter of the Law, the Spirit of which he preached, because he recognized it in himself, calling it Christ. That Spirit he discovered through his conscience.

I must not omit to say, however, that a consistent doctrine is hardly to be found in St. Paul's discursive Epistles when taken themselves according to the Letter.

I find Dr. Arnold quoted by Mr. Martineau in explanation of the supposed irregularities of the conscience in these words:

"Men get embarrassed by the common cases of a misguided conscience; but a compass may be out of order as well as the conscience, and the needle may point due south if you hold a powerful magnet in that direction. Still, the compass, generally speaking, is a true and sure guide, and so is the conscience; and you can trace the deranging influence on the latter quite as surely as on the former. Again, there is confusion in some men's minds, who say that, if we so exalt the conscience, we make ourselves the paramount

judges of all things, and so do not live by faith and obedience. But he who believes his conscience to be GOD'S Law, by obeying it obeys GOD. It is as much obedience, as it is obedience to follow the dictates of GOD'S Spirit; and in every case of obedience to any law or guide whatever, there must always be one independent act of the mind pronouncing one determining proposition, 'I ought to obey;' so that in obedience, as in every moral act, we are and must be the paramount judges, because we must ourselves decide on that very principle, that we ought to obey."

It is a plain case—the conscience must decide upon what constitutes duty. The appeal can be to no other principle—as may be easily seen by considering the absurd position of one who should allege a feeling of obligation to do a particular act against his conscience; for this is a manifest contradiction.

If it is alleged that the conscience leads men into opposing pursuits, and brings about violent conflicts; it must be answered, that this is not a legitimate result of the operation of conscience; but it is the consequence of decisions in the name of conscience by those who have previously wandered from this principle, by which they have measurably lost the power of *rightly* deciding upon some particular instance of duty. But even where this is the case, the remedy must be found in a return to that simplicity of life which is imposed by the conscience, for this alone offers the only hope of becoming a true follower of CHRIST;—as we may see

by the absurdity of supposing that CHRIST can be pleased with a false life, on pretense of serving him.

Turn this matter as we may, as no man can hope to please GOD by a false life, the inference is absolutely necessary that a life of truth and rectitude can alone give any assurance whatever of acceptance with the perfect Being whom all men conceive to be GOD.

Besides, we see the power of this principle in supporting men under the severest trials, even when, as we suppose, they have been misguided; and it is plain that if a sense of rectitude can sustain men through the sharpest trials when misguided, as we may suppose, it can not be otherwise than that its power must be without limit when it acts in the clear light which is proper to it. The conscience, then, is the Law of GOD in the heart; and this is the Angel of GOD, under whose guidance, by obedience to his commands, GOD will become an enemy to our enemies, and an adversary to our adversaries (Exodus xxiii. 22). Hence the moral sublimity of the simple injunction—Be just and fear not. We must consider, therefore, that the true IMMANUEL, or God-with-us, is the CONSCIENCE, and this principle, when suffered to speak freely in the soul, will echo the language, I am the Way, and will finally enable its possessor to understand what is signified by the two other offices, the Truth and the Life.

SECTION X.

HAVING thus set forward the very common-place opinion that the CONSCIENCE is an all-important principle in the spiritual organism of man, I will show, by examples, how readily this principle interprets many very striking passages of the gospels, making it more than probable that such passages originated in the action of this same principle, in those who wrote the gospels. The approval of such passages as I shall adduce, through the innate action of the Conscience, is the true ground of the assent which many give to the assumption of a supernatural authority for them. To act in obedience to the verbal, or written requirements of the gospel, upon this supposed authority, and to look for an external reward beyond the act, is to eat of the *flesh*—of the *bread*—and it is to drink of the *water* of *Jacob's well;* and, Whosoever drinketh of this water, as we read, shall thirst again: but to act from the principle of rectitude, upon which the written requirement is based, is to drink of the *wine*—of the *blood;* that is, of the *living water*—which, as we read, shall prove a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

In order to illustrate, I say, what is here intended, I will repeat a few passages, principally from the gospels, with some additions, made use of for a similar purpose in a volume I caused to be published in 1858, the design of which was to show that *Swedenborg* was a Hermetic Philosopher; remarking, simply, that Hermetic philosophers, in past ages, have been men who have recognized and bowed to the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, as seen in and through the forms, and ceremonies, and usages, which have generally been regarded as the substance of religion in popular theologies, all over the world. This Spirit is more or less clearly seen in the Sacred fables, and religious allegories, and in many mythical histories and divine poems, which have, in various ages and portions of the world, held mankind spell-bound, because they were something more than literal histories and representations—referring, as they did, to an invisible spiritual geography and history, full of wonder and marvelous beauty, infinitely transcending that of the visible world; for the external world, beautiful as it is, is but a shadow of the unseen.

A Catholic before an image, expressing his idea of the BEST, is before and in the presence of his GOD:—a Mohammedan, absorbed in prayer, with his face toward Mecca, or the Holy City, where the remains of his idea of the BEST repose, is no less before and in the presence of his GOD. In these, and in all similar cases, if the worshipers could but enter into each other's minds, they might recognize each other as brethren. Hence the beautiful, I might say wonderful,

passage in the Sacred Episode, the Bhagvat Geeta, in the Hindoo poem the Maharabat, where the personified GOD instructs his pupil: "I bear the burden of those who are constantly engaged in my service: They also who serve other GODS with a firm belief, in doing so, involuntarily worship even me."

The moral beauty of the gospel-teaching must needs be great, since this alone sustains the miracles even against the decisions of the intellect, which, but for this beauty, would long since have consigned those miraculous histories to the already large class of ancient fables. The alleged opposition of the will to the reception of the truths of the gospel, I regard as an error. The opposition is chiefly in the intellect, which, under the influence of modern science, refuses to receive the miracles as literal history; their presence, therefore, in the gospels, damaging the truth really taught by them. When they were written, the spirit of science had not made itself felt so strongly as to instruct the writers in the danger of using them. The moral will of man, so far from being opposed to the gospel morals, has, on the contrary, sustained the system against the decision of the intellect on the question of miracles, putting these aside as unessential. In one point of view, the will has, in some cases, rebelled; yet not against the moral teaching of the gospel, but against the claim to a supernatural origin for it. But this is so far from indicating a moral perverseness or obliquity in man, that it demonstrates the contrary. The moral decisions of the soul are com-

manding: they are positive, absolute, and admit of no appeal, when truly realized; and this is the reason why those in whom the SPIRIT OF TRUTH has made itself felt as a Law, refuse to acknowledge the authority of an external law claiming a supernatural origin. This does not indicate a perverse will, but may serve to demonstrate the supremacy, and the indestructible nature of GOD'S unwritten law on the heart of man; and provides the clearest possible assurance that no perverseness of written records can ever destroy this principle, this corner-stone in Zion, which, in the language of Isaiah, shall continue from generation to generation (Is. li. 8). Do what we may, this Spirit makes itself felt as a sweetly constraining inward law to the obedient, or as a bondage, in the form of an external law, to the disobedient (1 Tim. i. 9).

It is admitted freely, that the following interpretations will not appear to be decisive to those who have not attentively watched the power of the Conscience, and its laws of action in the soul: for it has its laws, like everything else. This class of students may readily imagine that the Conscience cannot do any mighty thing, such as removing "mountains" of sin—because they have no "belief" in it (Matt. xiii. 58). Not to think exaltedly of the Conscience—to have little or no faith in its efficacy—is to clip its wings and render it powerless, or rather, it is a sign of its absence; and to be in this state is to be dead, in the sense in which this word is used in the gospel. But let the Conscience be "ex-

alted," let it be "raised up from the earth," and it will draw the whole man after it (John xii. 32); let faith arise in it, and, though compared to a mustard-seed, the smallest of seeds, it may grow to become the largest of trees, regulating, and taming, and giving shelter to all the *thoughts* and *passions* of man, themselves compared to *birds* and *beasts*.

Let it be supposed, as I have said, that the CONSCIENCE (acting, I will add, in harmony with reason) is the HOLY SPIRIT, and let us observe how aptly it may explain many things in the sacred writings.

This, then, is the Spirit which, in reference to the immature or imperfect man—St. Paul's natural man (the true chaos of Genesis, according to some)—is said to have been in the world, and yet the world (the natural man) knew it not (John i. 10).

This is the Light that shineth in darkness, and the darkness, that is, the natural man again, comprehendeth it not (John i. 5).

This is the Spirit that knocketh at the door of every human heart, asking admission, and which we are warned not to grieve away (Ephes. iv. 30).

This is the Spirit of GOD which is in the world (man) reconciling the world unto himself (2 Cor. v. 19); whose bidding we are commanded to "do," if we would "know" that it is of GOD (John vii. 17).

This is the Spirit which, when it comes to any man, reproves the man of sin, because he has not believed in it (John xvi. 9).

This is the Spirit which is represented, at Jacob's well, as telling the woman "all things that ever she did;" for no other Spirit does this, and without the chance of a mistake, but the conscience.

This is the Spirit which *was* before Abraham; and whose coming has been the prediction of all time ("from generation to generation," Is. li. 8);—at whose coming the world, that is, the man to whom it comes, is judged. And the judgment is righteous (Rev. xvi. 7). A sense of the righteousness of the judgment is necessarily included in the judgment itself, for it makes a part of the inner consciousness which contains the whole case.

This is the ubiquitous Spirit which is with us in heaven and no less in hell (Psalm cxxxix. 8); the maker of both—a blessing or a curse; and yet it is the same Spirit.

This is the Spirit which, personified, says—The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life (John vi. 63); for this is not true of the mere spoken words of a person, but of that internal utterance which a pious soul hears through the conscience.

This is the Spirit which, personified, says: I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me (John xiv. 6); for this also is not said of a person, but of the Spirit of Truth, with which alone man may hope to realize a sense of unity with the Spirit of Holiness.

This is the Spirit of which it is said—Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained (John xx. 23);—for this is only saying that whomsoever the conscience

excuses, he is excused; and whomsoever the conscience condemns, he is condemned. It is psychologically impossible for the soul to conceive of GOD'S condemnation, when it approves itself; and, on the other hand, it is equally impossible for a self-condemned spirit to conceive of GOD'S approval. The conscience, therefore, is well called GOD'S vicegerent, or as in Scripture, Immanuel, or GOD-with-us.

This is the Spirit of which it is said—Whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Heb. xii. 6); and again—As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten (Rev. iii. 19); adding —Behold I stand at the door [of your heart], and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, [obey the voice], I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Rev. iii. 20).

And again: Behold, happy is the man whom GOD correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the ALMIGHTY: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole (Job v. 17, 18).

It is the mystical office of the CONSCIENCE to impose the correction here spoken of, and a blessing is pronounced upon those who heed it and do not despise it (Prov. iii. 11, 12).

This is the Spirit that appeals to the sinner in the affecting language—Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. xi. 28); for the *rest* here spoken of is moral rest, and has no reference to rest from mere physical evils, except that moral rest is the way to a power of endurance be-

yond the ordinary power of man, having its root in a genuine humility; for the strength of man lies in the power of GOD. This power works for and with man, when man obeys GOD'S Angel (Ex. xxiii. 20, 22), or Immanuel, or the Son, for these are all one and the same.

This is the Spirit through whose instrumentality men are united to each other, and thence united to GOD (John xvii.); for the conscientious easily harmonize. The wicked cannot harmonize, and those who love particular things supremely, which cannot be shared in common, are necessarily divided, without having a principle of union among them. But those who love the TRUTH supremely, or justice, which is included in it, can only be superficially divided; and the more they obtain what they love, the more they must come into harmony with each other, and finally into harmony with supreme TRUTH, that is, with GOD. Love between two persons is not perfect until they both love a third something, which may be common to the two. Hence this third something—let the reader conceive it aright—is well called the mediator.

The disposition to seek for and to do that which is RIGHT, has the qualities attributed to charity:—it suffereth long, and is kind; it envieth not; it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own [to the injury of another], is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all

things, believeth [good] of all things, and enduring all things, never faileth.

One, destitute of conscientious truth, though he speak with the tongue of an angel, is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

This is the Spirit, also, which has a pentecostal power: it speaks all languages, and every man hears it in his own language. The sun does not shine upon that people on earth, where the language of this Spirit is not heard: and blessed are they whose GOD is the Lord (Ps. xxxiii. 12). Blessed are they that trust in him (Ps. ii. 12). Blessed are they that keep his testimonies (Ps. cxix. 2). Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after this Spirit, for this is to hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. v. 6).

This is the Spirit at whose name every knee shall bow; for the commands of Conscience are "apodictic:" and when all things shall be subdued unto it, then shall this Spirit be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that GOD may be all in all.

Here, also, we may see the necessity of FAITH; faith in this Spirit: for without faith in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Spirit of Right, of Truth—no man will submit himself to it, and make its commands the Law of life. As already stated, this may be said of either the written or the unwritten Law; for the Scriptures are without power, or nearly so, over those who have no faith in them; and, in like manner, those who have no faith in the Spirit of Truth, as divine, cannot be expected to yield obedience to it. It can do no "mighty thing"

with those who have no faith or trust in it. But this is not true of a person supposed to possess supernatural power, and therefore the passages (Matt. xiii. 58, and Mark vi. 6) must not be understood as applicable to, or said of, a person. But it must be observed that when man disregards the SON, the SON does not lose sight of him; for a "day of judgment" is always "at hand."

It is easy to see how faith in CHRIST and faith in this SPIRIT are one and the same, when we understand that all of the moral injunctions contained in the gospel proceeded from the Spirit, as the "way;" and this is true, whether we suppose CHRIST a person or a personification.

This is the SPIRIT which says: No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is fit for the Kingdom of GOD (Luke ix. 62); for the conscience admits of no compromises. It must be accepted without any looking back wishfully toward Sodom.

This is the SPIRIT which says: He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me (Matt. x. 37). This is expressed still more strongly in Luke xiv. 26: If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own [natural] life also, he cannot be my disciple. This only means, that no man can be a disciple of Truth who is not ready, when obliged to choose between the principle of rectitude and anything else in the world, to yield

all things, rather than crucify the Spirit of Truth within himself.

This is the *Spirit*, again, to whom, personified, we are commanded to go with a full confession of our sins, through whose vicarious suffering we are pardoned.

This point in philosophy was well understood by Plato, who shows that a sinner can never be reinstated without a certain punishment as a purification. The sinner, according to Plato, is an unhappy man, miserable in the midst of his joys, until he is punished; yet the punishment referred to is not external, but internal: meaning that the sinner must internally suffer the pangs of a wounded conscience, as the phrase is, before he can be recovered to a state of virtue. This is the "chastening of the LORD." In such a case, the Conscience is said to suffer: but this is said only by way of metonymy, or the substitution of one word for another; for, it is not the Conscience that suffers, but the man; that is, the sinner. The *wicked* man suffers under the judgment of a *sinless* CONSCIENCE, which, in itself, does not and cannot suffer. The Conscience, I repeat, is in itself both without sin and without suffering; and by its condemnation, or "chastening" of the sinner, the sinner is prepared for pardon, which is finally pronounced by the Conscience itself, when the repentant state is completed, and not before. But the Conscience, being substituted for man, is said to suffer, the innocent for the guilty; and this is expiatory suffering, which is not only necessary, but there is no other principle "given under heaven," whereby man

can feel himself redeemed (Acts iv. 12). This is the reason why no one can avail himself of the sufferings of CHRIST, until he has complied with certain conditions said to be imposed by CHRIST. But the conditions referred to have a higher authority than that of a historical person. No one can avail himself of those sufferings until prepared for it by passing into the state of repentance; and this state or condition illustrates the action of Conscience. But as no one can come under the influence of the Conscience by any other power than that of the Conscience itself, it is said that no one can come to CHRIST except the Father draw him; for all such declarations must find their illustration in the Soul of man. The mystery of redemption lies in the mystery of the Conscience. To awaken the Conscience in any man is to awaken a principle which, faithfully followed, may bring life and immortality to light—in the Soul, and not as a mere belief founded upon authority from without: for, the Sense of duty is an undying principle, superior to all temporal power, and manifests a divine Spirit in man. If this was symbolized by the Star in the East, we may understand, that if it is followed it may lead to that divine love which has never yet found words adequate to its expression. It is represented as being born in a stable, not to indicate that it is denied to the great of the world, but that it is accessible to the humble, and especially to the contrite of heart.

If Bethlehem signifies the house of GOD or of prayer, then, what more appropriate place could have been

conceived for the birth of religion. As Astronomy is a generic word, and supposes a contemplation of both the sun and moon, and no less the planets, so religion and CHRIST may be considered generic words, including many principles.

That CHRIST should be referred to in a variety of ways in the mythical histories we have of the SPIRIT, need create no embarrassment. It may be considered an additional proof that he should not be regarded as an individual person. Thus, He represents the Scriptures, as also the Church founded upon the Scriptures, or in which they originated. He also represents humanity; and becomes the immediate expression of the Conscience: finally, He is an example of that divine principle which may be the consummation of all spiritual life, expressed by the language love—"GOD is Love;" in which affection the soul feels an inexpressible blessedness, and a yearning to go forth and spread the blessing over the whole race of man. This feeling, we may suppose, prompted the language: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Matt. xxiii. 37.)

There is an entire class of passages, which might be illustrated after the above manner—passages in which CHRIST speaks of himself as unable to do anything but what he seeth the Father do: The Son can do nothing of himself (John v. 19). He does not speak, as of him-

self, xii. 40, &c. In these passages we may see that a personified Conscience is speaking. This principle does not speak as of itself, with an independent power of its own, by which it may approve the bad and condemn the good. Its decrees are irreversible, and its commands became, in the eyes of Kant, the ground for an entire system, which he called the Metaphysics of Ethics, where the Conscience figures as "the Categorical Imperative," in despite of the results of his Critique of the Pure Reason. In the last analysis, however, the Reason and the Conscience must unite: they must kiss each other, as Moses and Aaron kissed each other in the *Mount of* GOD (Ex. iv. 27). Reasoning is not founded in Reason when it breaks with the Conscience, and the Conscience exhibits the other extreme when it knows no law. There must be a mystical "conjugial" marriage between them.

I have no wish to speak of the Conscience as the only principle illustrated in the life of JESUS. Very far from it; but I regard this spiritual principle as an all-important element in comprehending the teaching of the gospels. I am by no means disposed to deny a higher principle, but I am very sure that this higher principle can only be found in a pure heart, a "right spirit." Religion can only co-exist with righteousness; but superstition may, it is true, reign dominant in an unpurified soul, its proper soil.

I look upon the gospels as symbolic teaching; and

from this view many otherwise incomprehensible relations admit of ready explanation. Thus, the destruction of the "innocents" by Herod is not a historical fact, but a myth. It is the repetition of a much older story. Among the infinity of passions and affections and principles active in man, there is only one that is entitled to pre-eminence. This is the *Angel* sent to guide us in the right way (Ex. xxxiii. 20), and it is the *Prophet* like unto Moses (Deut. xviii. 15),—Moses himself representing this principle in the divine allegories of the earlier Scriptures. This one principle opposes the natural man while in what St. Paul calls the natural state; and the natural man, the Herod in this case, seeks to destroy it; which, however, he cannot do. In the attempt, on the contrary, good is brought out of evil, and the other "children" of man which, in respect to themselves, are innocent also (but as wild beasts are innocent), are cut off, and thus the divine in man is preserved. That Herod should be selected as the author of this imaginary crime, is very appropriate; for history gives us a long list of his offences against humanity, though among them this particular enormity is not named; and why? because he was not guilty of it. This explanation not only accounts for the silence of history, touching this offence, but it relieves us also from the difficulty of understanding how so enormous a crime could have taken place under the direction of a Roman governor, and yet the author neither be called to an account for it, nor stoned by the enraged people.

If we call the Spirit, of which I am speaking, the Son, as Hermas does, we may easily conceive what is meant by his eternal generation; what is meant also by his being One with the Father, of his very substance; and in what sense he is said to be born of the eternal virgin mother of all things, as I have already intimated; and yet he is but one only son, as the son of the Widow of Nain is said to have been an "only son." This Spirit becoming flesh in the "man CHRIST JESUS," spake forth the commands of the Father—as Moses did before him—"our conscience bearing witness" that he spake the very truth. Hence St. Paul also commends what he says of his doctrine to every man's conscience in the sight of GOD (2 Cor. iv. 2):—and why?—because he spake also from the Conscience, as all great moral teachers have done since the world began.

In this direction we may understand what the Hermetic writers mean by their simile of water mingling with water (spirit with spirit); for, as CHRIST is one with GOD, so he is one with man; and to as many as receive this doctrine in spirit and in truth GOD gives "the power of becoming SONS OF GOD" (John i. 12); or, as St. Paul expresses it—As many as are led by the SPIRIT OF GOD, they are the SONS OF GOD. So, then, the "only Son" may nevertheless be many, by the many simply being one in Spirit.

The supreme beauty of this principle over all others in man,—its sweetness and gentleness, "when not too much stirred up," as the Hermetic writers say (for when angry, it is a fiery dragon)—its combining the in-

nocence of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent, makes it easily find its place in Eastern metaphorical representations, where the eternal, the invisible, the unspeakable, is figuratively introduced as declaring of it from heaven—This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye Him.* This is the *Angel*, I repeat, and the *Prophet*, and the *Law* in the heart, spoken of by Moses; and it is no less the SPIRIT OF TRUTH and the COMFORTER, as declared in the New Testament;—not anything foreign to man, but something most intimately in him, by which he may be saved.

It may be easy to make objections to much of this interpretation; but, as I suppose, the objections will arise chiefly with those who find it difficult to distinguish the true principle commonly called the CONSCIENCE, and this difficulty proceeds from the fact that it is generally buried in forms, and crucified by ceremonies all over the world.

The Conscience is truly a unique principle, and cannot be made use of to any end beyond itself. Hence, to be conscientious, with a view to reward, is to misuse and pervert this principle. It is a "jealous" principle, and will be served for itself alone; yet not so as to deny the reason, for reason itself asserts the principle: and it has its appropriate reward; but this is what [the natural] eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to *imagine.* The rewards of piety are realized somewhat like those of friendship. It gives me pleasure, says one, to serve

my friend; but I do not serve him for that pleasure. So, of the Conscience,—the *intention* must not look beyond the *duty* which the Conscience dictates; and it never does so, when the Conscience speaks audibly.

This is the *Voice* of which much is said in the Scriptures, and which is not usually heard in "the streets," but is best heard in the heart. To hear this voice is to hear the voice of CHRIST; and to follow it, is to "follow" CHRIST: but this is only one voice in the midst of many others "in the world." In the midst of these other voices, passions of all sorts, this one voice may nevertheless be heard as one crying in the wilderness —Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths STRAIGHT. When this voice is listened to, the wolves are changed into lambs, and they then lead no more, but "follow."

If it be said that there is a want of power in the Conscience to *save*, and that, therefore, men must obey a written or verbal law, expressed through another, and that, if men *only would* obey the *written* law, all would be safe; then, let us observe the condition here expressed; if men *would only* obey the written, &c.; as if this might not, with more truth, be urged in favor of the Conscience—that, if men *would only* hear and obey its voice, all would be safe indeed. But now, as it is, men do not heed the inner law, the still small voice; and therefore, for this is the consequence, a written Law, said to have been thundered from Mount Sinai, has grown into authority for no other reason in the world than to supply its place; and yet, the real

authority for this written Law is not in the claim to a supernatural origin, but in its reasonableness, and adaptation to the wants of man, and its accordance with the inner Law itself. Besides, without refining very closely, we may see how the Law of Conscience authoritates itself by its own operation; for, we may observe how nature acts to enforce it, by the evils that follow in the train of those who depart from it—the design of which we must suppose is expressed in their effect, which is to bring men to a sense of the value and importance of the RIGHT and the TRUE. Also, we may observe the tendency of those who lose sight of rectitude, to fear imaginary evils, with dreadful names; the invention of an *extra*, or outward Hell, having no other origin than this.

Nature works by *means* no less in the moral than in the physical world, and her object ever is to preserve and protect herself; for nature is an eternal virgin, the true ISIS, embracing all that is, has been, or shall be. Why can we not perceive the truth of this as certainly, when we read it in the inscription on the Temple of Sais, as when we read it in the Revelation (i. 8): I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty? We need not be puzzled because, in the one case, the words are inscribed upon a temple dedicated to the Eternal Virgin; and, in the other, they are uttered in the character of her Lord: for, in this region, the LORD and the LADY are one and the same, and their mystical SON is

no less the same. The unity of the two was anciently expressed by an anomalous figure, statues of which may still be seen in many European collections, the meaning of which is known to but few of the travelers, who gaze upon them with curious eyes. We may wonder why the eternal Spirit appeared only in the masculine character; but must answer, that this was at the disposal of those who wrote the gospels, and they were not women. The Catholics have, in some degree, repaid this one-sidedness, by addressing their devotions to the MOTHER OF GOD; and, whatever others may think of this, in my opinion it expresses a beautiful truth; only, indeed, it is a mutual mistake to suppose a historical person, in either case: and here, perhaps, is to be found the interpretation of the mysterious allusions to marriage in Matt. xix.—a marriage of principles, and not of persons. We see that St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, 5th chapter, after discoursing minutely of marriage, adds these remarkable words (v. 32): This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST and the Church; though, in this case, the literal sense was to be observed also, as we see by the 33d verse.

SECTION XI.

With respect to the teachings of Christ in general, it is evident that some practical test is always applied to them in Christendom, even by those who are most resolved to obey them—not always a wise test, we are very sure; but still, a practical test of some kind always determines the sense of so-called spiritual teachings, come from what quarter they may; and those which cannot be practically carried into life are universally neglected. Rules which do not appeal to "sense and reason"—the test applied by St. Hilary to miracles—can never be received permanently in the world; and yet, this is not because of the "wicked heart of man," but simply because, whatever is against sense and reason, is against the *nature* which God has given us, and is therefore readily decided, with men of sense and reason, not to have come from God.

It has often been said, that there are no such injunctions in the gospels; that there we may meet, indeed, with what is above reason and sense, but with nothing which cannot be accepted by sense and reason; and that there is no injunction in the gospel which all men are not bound to obey. But, we may see that the

doctrine of marriage, set forth by CHRIST in Matt. xix. 12, if understood literally, would depopulate the world. The doctrine, however, is not commanded: it is only recommended to those "who can receive it;" and those only can receive it [understand it?] "to whom it is given."

In the teaching which follows, however, in the same chapter, the doctrine is absolute: If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. Where do we find this doctrine practiced in Christendom? If any individual could be found who should obey it literally, he would be called a fanatic and a fool; hence, a compromise is made, and many give liberally to the poor, and are the more able to do so wisely, by not selling all they have. Besides, if the possession of property is an obstacle to perfection —a word evidently used as a synonym for the kingdom of heaven—it should not be sold to another, to be a stumbling-block in his way, but should be destroyed.

But this injunction, Matt. xix. 21, is another proof that the gospels were written by Essenes; for, according to Philo and Josephus, they had all things in common. Whoever entered their society, held no property as an individual, and whatever wealth he carried with him into the society, was placed in the hands of appointed Curators, for the common use of the society.

The comment which follows, verse 24, upon the young man's unwillingness to join the Essenes in "following" the Spirit of Truth, is a beautiful metaphorical

allusion to the danger of riches to those who are not educated to their right use. A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle: meaning, simply, that the rich are too abundantly supplied with the means of worldly gratification, to be disposed to seek the less costly joys of what is called a spiritual life, requiring self-denial. To be born to riches, and yet not be prepared by nature, or education, for their wise use, is a misfortune—which is so open and visible a fact, that he who runs may read.

There are, no doubt, many passages in the gospels, as St. Peter tells us there are in St. Paul's Epistles, hard to be understood, 2 Pet. iii. 16. If this was so in the very days of the Apostles, it would be unreasonable to suppose it can be otherwise now. But this is no reason for accepting a proffered meaning, if it be unintelligible. If we cannot "understand" a passage, or a portion of Scripture, without "wresting" it, in violation of reason and sense, we had better "wait upon it," —as Lord Bacon said of certain other relations from the past. We ought to be fully persuaded in our own minds, Rom. xiv. 5; and be able to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear, 1 Pet. iii. 15; being careful to have a good conscience, verse 16. These conditions cannot be complied with, unless we use our faculties to "understand" the Scriptures rationally; for, to give an irrational, or unreasonable "answer," to

an inquiry in regard to our faith, is to give no answer at all, or worse than none.

It may be hard to understand, for example, why it was that CHRIST is represented as speaking so emphatically of giving his "flesh" to eat, as the *bread* which came down from heaven; with the promise that, if any man eat of this *bread*, he shall live for ever, John vi. 51; and yet, in the very same chapter, verse 63, declaring to his followers, that the *flesh* profiteth nothing!

I see no reason why much of this language should not be considered as having been used with some discursive latitude; as language is, evidently, in Matt. xix. 29—where we read, that every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. Here is a distinct promise of everlasting life to those who may forsake any one of several things, if done in the name of CHRIST, or for his name's sake; and if taken literally, a faithful follower might find himself, possibly, a little encumbered with relatives—a hundred fathers, and as many mothers, &c. It is perfectly plain, that by mere literal readings difficulties may be multiplied, not by hundreds only, but by thousands;—and this should admonish us to use whatever reason and sense GOD has given us, to guard against such interpretations as make the Scriptures meaningless or absurd. We do no real honor to the Scriptures, much less to GOD, by pertinaciously adhering to a preposterous literal sense, especially when a

figurative or metaphorical sense may disclose a beauty. It is the literal sense, undoubtedly, that "profiteth nothing,"—at all events in many cases.

More than one difficulty may be made out of the sixth chapter of John. In verse 32, CHRIST tells his hearers that the bread that Moses gave was not from heaven; and then in verse 49, he seems to give, as the evidence of it, the simple fact, that those who "did eat manna in the wilderness" were dead. He then says that—if any man eat of *his* bread, he shall live for ever (verse 51). This bread is then called his flesh (same verse); and then again he calls it bread (verse 58); and, to eat of that, his hearers were not to suffer the fate of their fathers, that "did eat manna and are dead;" but, the promise is—He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. May we not ask, in view of these passages—what is the difference between the followers of Moses and those of CHRIST, when, to us, they have all equally passed away? If the death of the followers of Moses was proof that his manna was not bread from heaven, why is not the death of the followers of CHRIST, a similar proof that his bread, also, was not from heaven?

It is evident that all of this talk about Moses and his manna, and CHRIST with his *bread*, is metaphorical language, teaching those who could *hear* (verse 60), that is, *understand* it, that by *Moses* and his *manna*, is meant the written Law; whereas CHRIST and his *bread* is the Spirit of the Law, and this is that which quickeneth (verse 63).

Some degree of latitude is absolutely necessary in the interpretation of the metaphorical language of this sixth chapter of John, or it is perfectly certain that no available sense can be gleaned from it. We honor the Scriptures most, and God their author, when we consider them as addressed to our reason and conscience, or to the Spirit of Truth in us. They originated in this Spirit; they are addressed to it; and they must be understood by it: and this is truly the appointed channel through which the soul may appreciate, and in some degree may hope to share in the illumination of godly men in former ages (John xvi. 13).

There are some passages in Scripture which appear to express pure paradoxes, or mere impossibilities. One occurs in Matt. xxi. 22: And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. The two words here used, prayer and believing, are of the greatest importance in determining the sense of this passage. We have but a very superficial idea of the nature of prayer, when we see it merely in a form of words, petitioning God for something. All effort is prayer. Every desire is a species of prayer. Every pursuit is a prayer, and every earnest pursuit is an earnest prayer. But in all cases the character of the prayer takes its complexion from the object of prayer. A prayer becomes divine when God is the object; or when the particular pursuit is followed with the idea of God as the law, within which the prayerful soul seeks what it seeks. If this idea be not present, every

pursuit is an unholy prayer—as if it were addressed to a false God. We may easily see that the Scripture, in the passage under consideration, refers only to divine prayer, and then we may readily understand that no soul, acknowledging its right relations to GOD, can pray but in subordination to GOD'S will, expressed in the course of nature, which is the order of providence. A soul in this state, really never prays for anything but for GOD'S will to be perfected in himself; and this is a work which is ever fulfilling itself, and the prayer of such a soul is always answered.

The word, believing, as a condition of prosperous prayer, will show us the same thing. Men do not really believe, in their hearts, that anything can prosper in the world except in subordination to GOD—by which I mean the orderly course of nature. So far as this is known, man never believes anything contrary to it, and cannot pray, believingly, for any such thing. No man ever prays that fire may not burn; that he might live under water; that the sun may not rise on the morrow, &c. But, at the point where knowledge ceases, and man is uncertain as to the order of things in nature, he prays, that is, he seeks what he desires in a vague state of belief, perhaps better expressed by the word uncertainty. But this uncertainty is converted into belief, when the prayerful soul refers its object to GOD; for in that direction such a soul sees its wishes already fulfilled: and not the less fulfilled when the special object of prayer is lost. For, in the truly prayerful soul, GOD is the real object, and such a soul is a believing soul,

and may with truth exclaim with St. Paul: All things are mine—because no aspiration is felt but in subordination to the will of GOD. The admonition of CHRIST, in Matt. xxi. 22, was addressed to disciples; that is, to the disciples of Truth, for CHRIST IS TRUTH; and his saying is not applicable to others, because they do not come within the conditions under which the admonition was used. This may seem an over-refined exposition, but it will prove to be the true one.

I am well aware of the great difficulty of understanding symbolism, especially to one who has not practiced himself in the interpretation of this species of writing. In addition to practice, there is need, also, of a wide experience and observation of life, and no little skill in detaching the actual substance taught, from the mere envelope in which it comes to us; because there is always something in symbolic writing which belongs to the form only, and this may and should be disregarded as unessential.

I will here point out a common teaching, expressed differently by Matthew and by John, though they both mean the same thing; thus, Matthew, in ch. xi. verse 10, refers to John the Baptist, as the Messenger; and then says: Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Here, John represents the Conscience calling men to *duty*—Prepare ye the way, &c., make *straight*, &c., that is, walk

rightly or righteously; and as this exhortation is taken from the Old Testament (Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1), we are almost openly told to refer the office of the Baptist to the older sacred writings, though this will appear more plainly presently.

CHRIST refers to the Baptist as a messenger calling us to duty, and whoever obeys the call, expressed in the letter of the Scripture, has a certain measure of excellence accorded to him. Nevertheless, in the performance of duty, as such, there is something like an effort, a labor, which imposes a constraint upon the spirit. There is nothing "greater" than this, however, except the kingdom of heaven; but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than one who finds his duty a labor. What is this, then, which is called heaven? It is CHRIST, as the "living water," or it is CHRIST, the Spirit. If we call it Love, we shall most readily see the operation; for, whatever any one does from Love, is done with joy and without effort; that is, a labor of love is a labor of joy. Therefore, to do one's duty from love is a far higher spiritual state than to do the same duty from a mere sense of obligation. We see, that, in Matthew, the teaching is put into the mouth of CHRIST.

Let us now see how the Gospel of John treats the matter, and shows the inferiority of the Baptist to CHRIST, for this is what is taught. Here, it is the Baptist that speaks, and not CHRIST (John i. 23): I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c.

Verse 25: And they asked him, &c.

Verse 26: John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

Verse 27: He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

The reference here is to CHRIST, as the "living water," which, coming after the Letter, is preferred before it. John, as a teacher of *duty*, puts some, though a wholesome, constraint upon the spirit of man, who has not yet "known" the *living water*. John baptizes in water; that is, he teaches the letter of the Scripture, as a *duty*, the performance of which, as a duty, is more or less a labor. But there is one that comes after him, who is preferred before him, or, as expressed in ch. iii. 30—He must increase and I must decrease; that is, when the living water, the Spirit of the letter, becomes known, the importance of the letter itself declines. The superiority of the Spirit over the letter, of CHRIST over John, is that of love over duty, in the blessing it confers; and while in Matthew it is said that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than the Baptist, the same thing is indicated in the Gospel of John by the saying attributed to the Baptist himself: There standeth one among you whom ye know not; He it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

In the allegory, John the Baptist personates the Conscience expressed in the written Scriptures, and thus is said to baptize with water, the symbol of the

letter. The honey (that is, the Truth) he feeds upon, is said to be wild. But CHRIST represents the Spirit of the letter which, "coming after" the letter, "is preferred before" it; and it is so much above the letter, that to possess the "least" portion of the Spirit makes the possessor greater than he who is the greatest of women born. This expression, *of women born*, as applied to the law, is not without its distinct meaning, for the written law is a birth on the nature or feminine side of life; whereas the Spirit is said to be born from above (John i. 32).*

Although persons are spoken of, and are put forward as speakers, yet we must see principles in them, or we are certain to miss the true teaching. CHRIST is preferred before the Baptist, for he was before him (John i. 30); that is, the Spirit is preferred before the Letter, because it was before the Letter. Yet it is said to come after the Baptist also (John i. 27), and how is this? The Spirit, as it is eternal, *was* before the Baptist, and *was* before Abraham also; but, as it comes to recognition in the phenomenal man, it is preceded by the written Law which, nevertheless, proceeded from the Spirit. The Essenes saw the Law as twofold; written, as we see it now in the Scriptures, and unwritten,

* The expressions *above* and *below*, in the Scriptures, except where visible nature is manifestly the subject, always mean *inward* and *outward*. Inspiration from above means Truth realized within. Thus St. Paul saw his Truth within, and called it inspiration. He was not taught his doctrine of the Spirit by man, but conceived it within himself.

the latter being the Spirit of the written Law. CHRIST represents the Law—sometimes as written, as where he says, I and my Father are one (though this is true of the Spirit also); and sometimes he speaks as the Spirit of the Law; or, as John represents him, as with the Father in the Beginning; for the Law, in its spiritual origin, is the decree of GOD, and GOD and GOD'S decrees are one.

To see the precise interpretation of the gospels, we must see with Jewish, or rather with Essene eyes, and must understand that by the Jews the Scriptures of the Old Testament were regarded as divine. If we call them the expressed or written Will, instead of the Law of GOD, we shall see the same thing; for the will of GOD is eternal, and yet, in its expression, we see it in time; and again, although eternity has neither a before nor an after, time has both. Therefore, the will expressed in time was preceded by the eternal will, and is followed no less by the same will.

Man, as himself a phenomenal being, a being of time, comes first into contact with the time-expression of GOD'S will, that is, into contact with the written Law; but in process of time, he may be "born in the Spirit," and then the Spirit is said to come after the written Law (after John, with his water as the symbol of it), and this, I say, stands related to the written, as CHRIST is to the Letter, or as Love is to Duty. Hence we read that Love is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom. xiii. 10), which, again, is expressed by St. Paul in 1 Tim. i. 5 in these words: Now the end [that is, the ob-

ject or purpose] of the commandment [in other words, the Law] is charity [or Love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith [sincerity] unfeigned. In Rom. x. 4 the language is: CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; while in Gal. iii. 24 the language is: The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to CHRIST, that we might be justified by faith—that is, by Truth.

In these several forms of expression we must understand but one thing, to wit: that *the Law was designed to beget its own Spirit in us;* and this Spirit is Love, as the fulfilling of the Law, and it is Charity out of a pure heart, and it is CHRIST also, for righteousness, to those who believe; that is, believe in the old Scriptures (for the new were not then written); and such a belief was necessary in order that the Scriptures might have power in the soul, for we read (Matt. xiii. 58, and elsewhere) that CHRIST, as the Scriptures, could do no mighty works in a certain place because of their unbelief.

The gospels, I say again and again, are symbolic histories—histories of a principle, and not of a person. Call it the Spirit of Truth, or call it Love, or Life, or call it Wisdom, the Logos, or Reason, and it will come to the same thing; only we must consider that while the Essenes saw or recognized the Spirit in the Scriptures, the Spirit *was* before the Scriptures, and is now and forever the witness and the judge of them. From this point of view the gospels will slowly give out their sense, and free us from bondage to its letter, precisely

as the same Spirit freed St. Paul from bondage to the letter of the Old Testament. But we must be patient, and above all we must be truthful ourselves, or we shall see nothing but the obscure Letter.

It must be observed that the principle represented by CHRIST in his mythical histories, is one-and-many (in the sense of Plato, in Philebus): one, as invisible; many, as visible: and therefore there is no departure from strict propriety in assigning to John the Baptist that portion of the *many* side, which is represented by the visible Law, although in other cases CHRIST personates the whole Law, both visible and invisible. Essentially, as Life, CHRIST is an impersonal being, and this is the reason why he cannot be said to have had a personal life in nature, or on the visible side of nature; but for this same reason his simulated histories may be conceived in the most unrestrained freedom, amenable only to the law of this Spirit. In one case he may be represented as an actual bodily person; and in another, in direct violation of the principles of all bodies, he may be represented as finding no hinderance in passing through material obstacles,—as in visiting the disciples in a close room, "the doors being shut." This is all right and proper in the treatment of the subject as a myth, but is absurd and impossible on any other supposition. To say that there is no living reality except as visibly embodied, would be to deny GOD himself, or see him only in visible nature. To the gospel writers CHRIST was the invisible Holy One of Israel, seen through the veil of the Old Testament: yet not merely

the Spirit of the Old Testament, but life itself, or, as CHRIST called it, the Spirit of Truth, that should lead the way to himself; for he is one with the Spirit of Truth. This Spirit, originally in the Hebrew religion, was killed by the forms and ceremonies and superstitions of the priests and Jewish people in Jerusalem—a tragedy which, in the course of time, was somewhat similarly repeated at Rome; but the Essenes who witnessed it in Palestine, or from Alexandria, unlike the reformers at the close of what are called the middle ages, contented themselves with making sacred dramas in which the death of the Spirit was duly represented, as I proceed to show.

SECTION XII.

I HAVE already intimated one of the objects which, as I suppose, the writers of the gospels had in the scene they have exhibited on Mount Calvary. I am very well aware of the astonishment with which any other than a literal interpretation of this scene is likely to be received; but as the fiction of a supernatural birth expresses the clear purpose of the writers to have been merely an artificial or artistic mode of bringing upon the stage of life a Spirit essentially invisible, through which to give a written body to their teachings as proceeding from that Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, whether conceived as the Spirit of the Hebrew sacred books, or as the Spirit of the Church under the symbol of a woman, there must have been some special object in the scene by which the personification of the Spirit of Truth was removed from this lower world. It is not however denied, but that a real person might have suffered on Mount Calvary—and that, too, for the sake of the Truth. The world has seen too many examples of this species of suffering to make it improbable in the case of JESUS, as a man. But as the representation of the supernatural birth lies altogether out

of the order of nature, so do most of the attendant circumstances of the death of JESUS, as reported in the gospels; and the question naturally arises, as to what the writers designed to teach or to signify by that event. The question lies, with very many in this age, between a total denial of the story, and some interpretation of it, which may be acceptable to "sense and reason."

Most certainly I look upon this scene, or most of its accompaniments, as not historically true. As the eternal GOD has never been born of a mere carnal woman, so has he never suffered death by crucifixion at the hands of man. Yet, at the same time, the scene on Mount Calvary figures to us a most important truth.

The priesthood of the Jews was at Jerusalem, but the Jews themselves extended over Palestine and to Alexandria. Now, there was no learning of any importance at Jerusalem—no science, no philosophy;—and the whole Jewish system of religion had degenerated into formalism, by which its Spirit was smothered, and in a worldly sense corrupted. But Alexandria had succeeded to the philosophy of Greece. This philosophy was at its height in Greece some three or four hundred years before the new era, and passing to Alexandria, its light extended about the same period after the new era. Of the Greek philosophers, Plato, a mystic writer, is known to have been in the highest repute in Alexandria. From this school came many distinguished philosophers, both enemies and

friends of Christianity; among the latter, Origen himself: and coincident with the date of the new era we find Philo, a Jew, in the spirit of this school, giving interpretations of the Hebrew sacred books in extenso, calling the Hebrew religion a divine philosophy. He gives us the remarkable account of the Essenes, with whom he undoubtedly held very close relations, and discloses their principle of regarding their sacred writings as an animate being (of course a rational being), its Letter representing the Body, and its Spirit representing the Soul. This spirit they saw had been crushed by the formalism of the Jewish priesthood.

Casting their eyes upon the state of religion in Jerusalem, the Essenes conceived the idea of giving a dramatic life and death to what they regarded, nevertheless, as an invisible ever-living Spirit; availing themselves, for this purpose, of the actual sacrifice of one of their number, who had fallen a victim to his attempt to introduce a more spiritual state of religion and life than was known among the sensual Jews. There is not the least extravagance in supposing that JESUS was an Essene, or a member of some similar society, and that he had even been commissioned to attempt a reformation, as an Apostle and High Priest (Heb. iii. 1), and that he was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house (verse 2); and having proved his fidelity, even unto death, his name became a synonym for the Spirit by which he had been animated. One example, in the use of his name, in setting forth the mysteries of the Spirit after a mythical and parabolic

method, would naturally be followed by many of the members of the secret society, all intent upon the same general view; and so we have several gospels, where we read of a miraculously born person, no mere man sufficing for their purpose; and he was tragically removed from the scene through the instrumentality of the priesthood, whom the Essenes regarded as the murderers of the Spirit indeed.

The gospel writers, in order to carry out their purpose, and exhibit the Jewish priesthood, Elders, Scribes, Pharisees, and people, as the instruments of the death of JESUS, are very minute in referring to them.

Thus:—It was the chief priests, Elders, and Pharisees, who took council how they might put JESUS to death (Matt. xxvi. 3, 4; Mark xiv. 1; Luke xxii. 2; John xi. 47 and 53).

It was the chief priests and Elders that bribed Judas to betray JESUS (Matt. xxvi. 15).

It was the chief priests and all the Council who sought for witnesses against JESUS, to put him to death (Mark xiv. 55): they sought for false witnesses (Matt. xxvi. 59).

It was the chief priests and Pharisees that sent officers to take JESUS (John vii. 32),—with lanterns, torches, and weapons (John xviii. 3).

It was the High Priest, the chief priests, and Elders, that accused him (Matt. xxvi. 65, and xxvii. 12; Luke xxiii. 10).

It was the "voice" of the chief priests and Elders that "prevailed" in procuring the sentence of death (Luke xxiii. 23).

It was the chief priests that "moved the people" to call for the release of Barabbas, instead of JESUS (Mark xv. 11); and they cried out, Crucify him, verse 13; and they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him, verse 14; and they cried out the more fiercely (Luke xxiii. 5). See also John xix. 6.

It was the *Jews* that cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him (John xix. 15).

It was the chief priests that led JESUS away and crucified him (John xix. 15–18).

The chief priests, Scribes, and Elders, mocked him on the cross, &c., &c. (Matt. xxvii. 41). See also John xviii. 35.

In all this, we see that the immediate authors of the death of JESUS were those in Jerusalem who had killed the Spirit of the Jewish religion by their formalism, ceremonies, and superstitions; by which they had converted the house of prayer into a den of thieves (Matt. xxi. 13; Mark xi. 17). It was they who had made the commandments of GOD of none effect by their traditions.

Of the three sects among the Jews, the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes, the two first named, with the priesthood at Jerusalem, as I have said, were observers of the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish religion; and they had put "a yoke upon the necks of the disciples" (of Truth), which, as St. Peter said, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts xv. 10). These were the generation of vipers of the 3d chapter

of Matthew: But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come (verse 7)? These were the "hypocrites" of the 23d chapter of the same gospel, who had shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither going in themselves, nor suffering others to enter therein (verse 13). These were the hypocrites who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretense made long prayers. They paid tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the Law—judgment, mercy, and faith: these they ought to have done, and not left the other undone. These were the fools, and blind guides, who could strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. They made clean the outside of the platter, but within were full of extortion and excess. They were likened unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness, &c., &c., through the whole chapter.

But where were the ESSENES throughout this tremendous anathema? Not a syllable about them; and why? because this anathema came from the bosom of their society. The Jewish priesthood had buried the SPIRIT OF TRUTH in forms, ceremonies, and traditions. But the Essenes saw the TRUTH under the letter, and through the dead ceremonies of the Church. This was their secret, the attainment of which was regarded as a great mystery, because it is said to be of a nature not

to be communicated by an external process to man; for it must be felt and lived. Those who would "know" it, must "do" it. The members of this society only spoke of their secret among each other, as the Masonic brethren speak of their secret at the present day; and they only wrote of it in allegory and symbolism, in obedience to a solemn oath—as any one may see by reading Philo's account of the Therapeutæ, who were a portion of the Essenes. Whether the Masons of the present day understand this secret or not, is not now the question.

It is true, that the writers of the gospels seem to offer an occasion for the hate of the chief priests against JESUS, in his terrible denunciation of them. But this is, as I see it, only a necessary part of the drama. The Spirit of Truth must be supposed to condemn the corruptions of a degraded church.

In order, now, to see the artificially dramatic character of this scene, we must look closely at another, and a very important point, to wit: that the gospel writers, in order to carry out their main purpose, and exhibit the priesthood as the principal authors of the murder of the Spirit of Truth, were obliged to violate all of the probabilities of history, in the character they were compelled to give to a Roman governor. We must know very little of the history and the policy of the Roman government, before we can believe, for a moment, that there is a particle of truth in the story, so far as Pilate is made to act a part in the tragedy.

His public character is sacrificed against all probability; and he is compelled to exhibit the most incredible weakness as a private individual. With the whole power of the Roman government to support him in the protection he was bound to give to the innocent, he allows the priests of a religion, which, as a Roman, he could not have been concerned to maintain, to carry to execution one in whom, after the fullest examination, he had found no fault, Luke xxiii. 14; and though wishing to preserve JESUS, with the Roman army to enforce his wishes, he permits the mob of a conquered country to perpetrate the stupendous crime recorded in the gospels (John xix. 12).

I repeat, now, that there is no probability in this part of the story. The Roman governor was bound by his place, his power, his reputation, and his sense of justice, to have protected JESUS; and we have no reason to suppose he was wanting in a due sense of these claims upon him.

The true operation of the Roman government is clearly set forth in the account of its treatment of St. Paul, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, in the course of which Festus declares, in the presence of Agrippa, that—It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid to his charge (Acts xxv. 16). In the case of JESUS, the Roman governor inquires into the accusations himself; examines JESUS personally; and not only finds "no fault" in

him, but wishes to save him, and yet allows him to be sacrificed! This cannot be a genuine history, and all that can be seen in it is the design of the writers to exhibit the opinion of Pilate as so much testimony in favor of the innocence of Jesus, and it was thus introduced in order to set off the actual spiritual crime of the priesthood in its greatest enormity.

The only explanation that can be given of this, must be found in the purpose of the writers of the drama. They were of the Essene sect or society of the Jews, and had a doctrine held as a secret among themselves, by which they saw the Spirit of the Jewish religion murdered under the law and the ceremonies. For their own edification they devised a dramatic representation of this murder of the Spirit, and were compelled, in the execution of their design, to outrage all the probabilities of history. The august authority of the Roman governor they trampled under foot; and made a priesthood, without civil power, take an innocent life against the express wishes of the governor in whom the civil power resided, and who represented at that time the greatest power known in the world. There cannot be a particle of truth in this part of the story.

But the authors of the story were compelled to make a history suitable to their purpose; and they obliged the priesthood to crucify the Spirit of Truth.

This being accomplished, the gospel writers exhibit a beautiful Truth in what followed. The Spirit of Truth cannot die;—and as often as it is buried under the forms and superstitions of an outward church, it

rises again, and becomes visible to those who love it, though not to others. CHRIST, in the resurrection, was seen only by his friends and followers, the followers of Truth, who alone are privileged to see this Spirit.

I repeat again, that the whole of this part of the story is mythical, and without a historical basis; and I find no difficulty in attributing it to the Essenes; and this I do the more easily as I advance in a comprehension of the wonderful spiritual sense contained in the gospel relations.

Many Hebrew scholars have called attention to the signification of Hebrew words employed in many portions of Scripture, especially names of persons and places, and have suggested their meaning as explanatory of the underlying sense of the writers. Thus, every place of encampment mentioned in the 33d chapter of Numbers has a distinct meaning in Hebrew, not given in the translation; from which it is supposed that, to the original Jews, these words carried a distinct sense, explanatory of the writer, which is wholly lost to the modern reader.

If this is so, and there seems no reason to doubt it, then, although the gospels were written in Greek, as many of the names are known to be Hebrew, some of these may appear to ask for an interpretation from some consideration of the Hebrew language. Thus the name of Judas and that of Bar-abbas almost disclose a peculiarity even to an English ear, calling for explanation, as if they had some special signification. But I will

leave this point for the examination of Hebrew scholars.

St. John has given us one intimation, in his account of the crucifixion, not communicated by either of the other gospel writers, and one of the most significant and beautiful that can be imagined. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all refer to the parting of the garments of JESUS: but John alone gives us the peculiar fact that "the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout." The garments were parted and divided among the multitude; but there was one thing which was whole and entire, without break or seam from the top throughout. This was not divided, but lots were cast for it. As a mere historical fact, this would not seem to be of much importance, but as a symbolism it is exquisitely beautiful, and may serve to teach us the double nature of Truth; its unity and its multiplicity: and that while the "garments" of Truth may be divided and dispersed, there is yet, inherent in Truth, an essential unity, without seam or break of any kind, which the multitude is not allowed to destroy. This unity is the "living water," the "wine," the "Spirit that quickeneth." This is the true gospel of which the written gospels themselves are but the garments: and do we not see how these are divided in the Christian world, every sect claiming its shred, and holding it forth as the seamless coat?

Before leaving the topic of the crucifixion, I will

barely say, that the writers of the gospels might have had more than one object in presenting their friends with that scene. They might have had the opinion that the death of the Body is necessary to the liberation of the Spirit. This was the opinion of the Neo-Platonists at Alexandria at or about the time the gospels are supposed to have been written, and those who have made themselves acquainted with ancient opinions, especially the opinions entertained at Alexandria, know very well that much was said of what was called "the descent of the soul" from supernal regions; and that the Body was regarded as its prison, if not its punishment, for some crimes committed in a pre-existent state. Vide Glanville's *Lux Orientalis.*

Another object might have been that of signifying the triple nature of man, in the dramatic arrangement of the *three* upon the cross; the Spirit of Life being placed between, as it were, the soul and the body, these latter being represented by two thieves;—because, while in the body they exercise an unlawful control over the Spirit; while yet, one of the two, by uniting with the Spirit, may be ("to-day") in paradise. The soul by uniting itself with, or reverencing the Spirit of Truth, shares in its life; but by yielding to the body it perishes with the body.

In the consideration of the meaning of a symbol or type, we are by no means limited to one or even two or three senses, for it may have many senses. The main point is, that we assign no meaning to it which is

not true to nature. A type which signifies nothing in nature, signifies nothing at all. We are at liberty also to assign probable meanings, provided only that it be done problematically and not dogmatically. Thus, some of the incidents recorded as having transpired on Mount Calvary, may have been intended expressly to signify what was supposed to take place in an actual death: the rending of the veil of the temple means, for example, the dissolution of the natural body in death; this being the veil of the Temple of the Holy Ghost; the "flesh" being called a veil in Heb. x. 20. The quaking of the earth and the rending of the rocks, may be similarly understood; and even the appearance in the "holy city," of the bodies of "Saints which slept," may signify that preternatural memory, which has been often said to mark the experiences of the dying.

Another object, still, may have been to signalize what has been so often exhibited in the history of the world, and most frequently in the very name of CHRIST; that, "everywhere that a great soul speaks forth its thought is Golgotha." To speak into popular opinions, no matter what they are, is generally to gain immediate eclat; but a prophet has no honor in his own country. He is crucified. Even in cases of dissent on minor points, and which would seem to be of no great importance, we see how the dissenter is pursued with satanic malignity. A fair reputation is no protection against the most malicious insinuations, if not downright slanders. To guard against this, very many smother their thoughts, and live a lie indeed—by an

external conformity with some system in which, in their hearts, they have no real sympathy. Some men are ready to die for opinions, while others seem to prefer maintaining them by the murder of their brethren.

Meantime, it must be admitted that, as conformity to generally-received opinions is no sign of the truth, so neither is an opposition to such opinions any sign of it. When the gospel appeared, it had the whole Jewish world against it; and when Luther appeared, he had nearly the whole Christian world against him. All the world believed, once, that the Earth was the centre of the universe, &c. We should see that questions of Truth cannot be determined by vote; which may show us the folly of attempting to fix a Christian creed by the vote of councils, so often vainly resorted to in former ages. Such determinations necessarily fall into their places as mere historical facts, upon which the philosophical historian makes his own inferences. A truth, really seen to be such, may perhaps always be seen in a double character, as it is in time and in space—as it extends from generation to generation, and as it extends over geographical spaces. Some speculative writers have indicated something of this by giving what they call both an altitude and a latitude to truth; or, like the Swede, by talking of discrete and continuous degrees, the unity of which has a name that may mean something or nothing, according as it is understood. In such speculations, the student often attains a position which, however seemingly true

for himself, it must be confessed, is no law for others—a conclusion which ought, at all events, to enforce the doctrine of charity.

Be all this as it may, the scene on Mount Calvary, whatever else it may represent, most clearly and decidedly indicates the opinion of the writers, that the Spirit of the Hebrew religion had been murdered by the Jewish priesthood; while yet the Spirit cannot die. The Spirit is the mystical Father of the Church; and the Church is, at the same time, the Bride of the LORD, and the Mother of the Son of GOD—as regarded by the gospel writers: and yet this is seen only in the Spirit. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

A merely sensuous view cannot determine the question of priority between the Spirit, the Church, and the Scriptures. It may appear that, in order of time, the Spirit must be first. This may be supposed to express itself in writings, or to organize a church; but then, it may be supposed that the church embodies its doctrines in writings, from which the Spirit again is supposed to "proceed." The question of priority between spirit and matter, soul and body, is equally insoluble for the senses. We may see the difficulty by considering water and ice, and attempting to decide by the senses alone which is first in the order of nature. In torrid regions water immensely predominates, and an inhabitant of southern climes must naturally decide for water, and hold the opinion that without water there could be no ice; but a hyperborean, living in the

midst of perpetual ice and snow, might just as naturally look upon water as the exception, and consider, that without ice there could be no water; for water, to the senses alone, is melted ice as certainly as that ice is congealed water. Finally, however, through the intervention of other sources of knowledge, it may come to be seen that water and ice are two conditions of another thing; and then the question arises—what is this other thing?

Through some channel similar to this, mere time-conditions begin to disappear, and a higher truth is entered upon, which may finally be seen not to be subject to time at all; and here it is that the student begins to understand the doctrine of immortality as a life, and not merely as a tradition.

Something similar may be seen from a moral point of view, by considering the fictitious contestants *John Doe* and *Richard Roe*, and observing the *principle*, the principle of JUSTICE, supposed to decide between them —to which the contestants themselves may be placed in harmonious relation by the love of GOD, which is the love of justice. By calling this the Spirit of Truth, we may see the office of the MEDIATOR; the principle which the Latin poet saw and expressed in the celebrated lines, *In medias res*, &c., and which Pythagoras embodied in the caution "Nothing too much,"—as we are told even in Scripture not to be righteous overmuch. Plato has given the principle a place in the Statesman, as something "difficult to be seen," between

what he calls excess and deficiency—the two thieves in the allegory.

When the truth is once seen, it may be the more easily recognized in the many forms in which it has been expressed in the various languages of man.

SECTION XIII.

The Essenes, as I have repeatedly said, were the spiritual sect among the Jews. They formed a society having a peculiar doctrine, which the members were solemnly sworn to hold as a secret. They were not to speak of their doctrine except among each other, and they were under oath not to write of it except in allegory and symbolism, "as they received it." The members were not initiated, or received into the society, until a trial of three years had proved their fitness for a participation in the sacred knowledge claimed as peculiar to the society. We are fully informed of the character of this society, by both Josephus and Philo; and the latter has given us a clue for discovering the nature of the secret which separated this sect from the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

That their secret had reference to the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures, there cannot be a doubt; and in the statement of Philo, that they regarded those Scriptures as a living creature, comparing the letter to the body, and the soul to the Spirit, we are furnished with the broadest possible hint for understanding their secret. We are blind not to see it.

It is not out of place to remark here,—a fact to which I have already alluded,—that the Free Masons of modern times claim a direct doctrinal descent from the Essenes; and, in asserting this claim, they affirm that the Essenes were in possession of what they call the Temple secrets—thus, certainly carrying the Essenes back to the days of Solomon. Now, the Masons, besides being a brotherhood, have a secret which relates in part, at least, to a tradition concerning the death of Hiram Abiff, "the Widow's Son" (1 Kings vii.)

I am not a Mason myself, but I have studied very carefully the books of Dr. Oliver and Dr. Mackey, on Free Masonry, these writers being acknowledged lecturers on the mystic art. My object has not been to gratify an idle curiosity, but I have been willing to profit by whatever hints I might find in the books in question, and they are by no means few or unimportant.

Now, what is to be understood by the Widow's Son, who plays so important a part in the mystic ceremonies of secret societies? We must observe that this widow's son is called Hiram the Builder.

The Essenes had many books relating to their secrets, which they kept concealed with the greatest possible care. Eusebius has given the opinion that some of these books, "it is highly probable," are "our Gospels and Epistles;"—and do not these relate to a wonderful death and resurrection? We must now observe that the person who is most conspicuous in the New

Testament is a carpenter's son; and why may he not be called a Builder also?

In the course of time, a Pharisee, St. Paul, penetrated, as I suppose, the precise secret of the Essenes: for an actual, positive truth cannot be confined within the limits of a society, by any means whatever. Conventional signs may be limited to the initiated of a society, but they are not Truth, and answer only a conventional use. St. Paul saw the Truth of the Scriptures under the letter, and became a preacher of it. His preaching was successful, and he gained many converts.

But now, as must have happened, many of those converts had not entered in at the "right door," and the Apostle to the Gentiles had the greatest difficulty in keeping his followers in the way of Truth, as we may see especially by his Epistle to the Galatians. They were continually sliding back to "the beggarly elements," to the great distress of St. Paul. O foolish Galatians, says he, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the Truth, before whose eyes JESUS CHRIST hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you!—Are ye so foolish? he exclaims—ye observe days, and months, and times, and years;—I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain, &c. The declaration of St. Paul, that JESUS CHRIST crucified had been evidently set forth among the Galatians is remarkable, as showing that St. Paul could thus speak of a mere descriptive account, or at most a mimetic (ma-

sonic?) representation of the crucifixion; for, certainly, JESUS was not crucified "among" the Galatians. But to proceed.

At this period the written gospels were not publicly known. But, as we may readily suppose, the preaching of St. Paul forced them out of the hands of the Essenes, and they became public, through the unavoidable mixture of the converts of St. Paul with the genuine ESSENES; for they both held, in fact, the same doctrine.

The only difference I can discover between the view of St. Paul and that of the Essenes, as I conceive that of the latter to have been, is, that the Essenes saw the Spirit of Truth in the Hebrew sacred books, whereas St. Paul saw it in the Church; though he also saw the Law as the flesh of CHRIST. But we must consider the Spirit of Truth as one only, whether seen in the Scriptures or in the Church. In Philippians iii. 4–6, St. Paul evidently refers to the written Scriptures and Jewish ceremonies as the "flesh;" certainly meaning the *flesh of Christ*, which, in 2 Cor. v. 16, he tells us he had left behind him; the love of CHRIST, the Spirit, constraining him thereto. In Colos. i. 24, he speaks of the Church as the "body" of CHRIST, as he does also in Ephes. i. 22, 23. But he is speaking of the same Spirit, which is also the Spirit of humanity; and this was his *mystery*, the mystery he preached, calling it sometimes the faith, and sometimes the gospel he preached; and by his preaching, I repeat, he had

brought into the fold many who could not fully understand his doctrine.

Hence, as the accessions from "without" increased, a diluting process became inevitable. Many of the converts from the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Gentiles could not understand the doctrine of the SPIRIT; and as this class increased, a division grew up among the followers of the TRUTH. The weak would have a real historical person, just as the more weak, even in our own times, must have images and relics—unable to worship GOD in Spirit and in truth (John iv. 24). The real Essenes remained in possession of their secret, while a nominal portion of them received the name of Christians, which was given to them at Antioch (Acts xi. 29). And this portion, always tending to a majority—till visited anew by the SPIRIT OF TRUTH—finally superseded, numerically, the original sect; and the mythical history of JESUS began to be regarded as veritable history.

Many of the so-called Fathers of the Church, however, continued to be imbued with the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, and saw well enough that the gospels were symbolic books, needing interpretation; but as they were probably members of the secret fraternity, they could not openly declare the Truth. These finally fell into a decided minority, and gradually receded from popular observation, leaving the more numerous and probably noisy new-comers in possession of the public eye and ear.

But the Essene doctrine was not lost. It has come

down to the present time, and it never can be lost; for as often as it is buried under the letter or the mere forms of the church, it will "come forth" again. Truth cannot die: and this is, itself, the great TRUTH which is taught in the gospel representation of the death and resurrection of CHRIST—the SPIRIT OF TRUTH—murdered by the Jewish priesthood. This same TRUTH, overlaid and buried in forms and ceremonies and traditions from age to age, is perpetually rising again and again, and teaching the doctrine of itself. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Truth shall not pass away. Whosoever loves anything better than he loves TRUTH, does not love CHRIST; for CHRIST is the SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

Many of the early Fathers, in all probability Essenes themselves, were allegorists either upon one or more, and some of them upon all of the miracles of JESUS. Origen was the most thorough; but St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Theophylact, St. John of Jerusalem, St. Hilary, St. Gregory the Great, Eusebius Gallicanus, St. Theophilus of Antioch, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Irenæus, and others, were all of them to a greater or less extent allegorists. A few of them denied the reality of some of the miracles, as being "against sense and reason"—a rule which must exclude all miracles or none whatever. To explain one, or two, or half a dozen of the miracles upon natural grounds, even if it could be done satisfactorily, would, in the first place, only serve to convert the relations into a mere ordinary history of something in the past; while, in the next place, the

attempt itself to make such explanations shows that the presence of miracles in the gospels is offensive to the intellect, and can only be tolerated when no explanation is possible: and yet it is just here that reason steps in, and if it does not deny the possibility of miracles altogether, it defines them into harmony with nature, by regarding them as a species of parable.

The author has heard it gravely asserted, that the reason why the disciples going to *Emmaus* did not recognize JESUS was, because it was in the "evening," and probably too dark to distinguish the person of any one! as if such a fact, for such a purpose, could have entered into the contemplation of the author of the gospel! This explanation only makes a ridiculous story of one of the most beautiful and instructive parabolic representations in the gospels, the meaning of which may become apparent by contemplating it under the following explanations.

The reader must consider that the story is altogether Jewish, and has reference to a belief in the Truth, the CHRIST of the old or Hebrew sacred books. This Truth is not one of mere history, which a lad of fifteen, or, it may be, of twice this age, can be supposed to apprehend fully. The sacred books of the Hebrews express, or, rather, conceal the most profound Truth that the soul of man can receive; I mean, when recognized in their full power. It is impossible that a very young man should fully appreciate these books. Some useful

meaning may be gathered, no doubt, by those of any age from many parts of the Bible; something to touch the heart, in the Psalms and elsewhere, and many useful prudential maxims everywhere, for the conduct of life. But, valuable as this may be, there is a profounder sense in these old Hebrew books. We may be certain of this without accepting the interpretations of Philo, of Origen, of Swedenborg, or those of any other individual, some of which may be fanciful and dreamy. Now this deeper Truth I suppose to be unseen to very many full-grown men, and to nearly all of the very young and inexperienced, simply because it expresses views of the world attained only in later stages of life, when seen realities have measurably given place to the unseen; sense to reason. We may see a very pointed allusion to the difficulty of understanding the "oracles of GOD" in the last three verses of the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In order now to understand the teaching of this story of the disciples going to Emmaus, as recorded in the last chapter of Luke, let us suppose that—in the "evening" of life, its "day far spent" (verse 29)—two or three "full grown" mature men are "gathered together," for the sole purpose of discovering the true sense of the Scriptures, after having perhaps most of their lives looked upon these records with very little else than a traditional respect. Let us suppose that these "two or three" are conscious to themselves of having no divided purpose, but that their sole object is to examine the Scriptures in the Spirit of Truth.

I say, first, that these two or three are now in the condition expressed in Matt. xviii. 20. They have assembled in the name of Truth; and the Spirit of Truth is in their "midst," according to the promise. They are, by supposition, looking into the Scriptures to find the Truth of them, the Spirit of them, the CHRIST of them. This Spirit, in the story under consideration, is represented as drawing near and going with them, at the moment when they "communed together and reasoned" upon the sacred subject. But the disciples, by supposition, have the Spirit of Truth really in themselves; and this is the JESUS, the CHRIST, of the sacred books: but, as yet, this Spirit is not seen in the sacred books; and this is represented in the story by the simple expression, "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." They proceed in their inquiry, which is dramatically represented as growing out of the oppressed state of the Church, which is of the same nature with her SON; for the Church is Mary, the Mother of JESUS in the allegory. But here the Church must be regarded as it is in the Spirit, and not as she often appears under earthly administration; for, as some express it, the Church is twofold, visible and invisible. Invisibly, in the Spirit, the Church is immaculate; but as she appears in the world, she at times crucifies her Son.* She was regarded in this depressed state by the

* It is by no means perfectly certain that this view is not retained in the (Roman) Catholic Church, and did not prompt the Pontifical Letter issued only a few years since, affirming, as a doctrine of the Church, the immaculate conception of the Virgin

gospel writer, who represents the two disciples as talking of this humiliation of the Church; and that which they saw depressed them. But their faith prevailed over this view, and they saw, in the Scriptures themselves, that the Spirit of Truth is subject to such temporary depressions, from which, nevertheless, it rises from time to time. By thus passing in review before their minds various portions of the Scriptures, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets" (verse 27), they at length recognized the Truth, the CHRIST of the sacred books, as a living eternal Spirit, notwithstanding the depressed state of the external Church. This perception of the Truth, which is only possible "to them that are of full age" (Heb. v. 14), is expressed by saying that "their eyes were opened:" and this, I say, means that their understanding was opened, by the Spirit of Truth in themselves; as expressed in the same chapter, verse 45, where the Spirit of Truth is represented as opening the eyes of the understanding of the "eleven,"—and why was this? The reason is given in the same verse: it was in order that "they might understand the Scriptures." A true faith begins within; and that beginning of faith, or perception of CHRIST in the Hebrew sacred books, is symbolized in this story of the disciples going to Emmaus.

mother of the Son of GOD. There is a kind of logical necessity in retaining the idea of the purity of the mother, if we would retain that of the Son; and what does it signify to a worshiper, whether he direct his devotions to purity, as conceived in a woman, or as conceived in a man—if there is to be a person in the case at all—since the living idea in the conception is that of purity in either case?

As *bread*, in the Scriptures, signifies doctrine, the breaking of bread by CHRIST, referred to in verse 30, and his giving it to the disciples, means that the Spirit of Truth discovers the truth of the Scriptures, and feeds its followers with it, which, when eaten, as in Ezekiel, is like honey in the mouth for sweetness. This same thing is expressed, but differently, in John xvi. 15.

It is not without instruction as to the true object and purpose of the gospel of Luke, that this scene occurs at the close of it. The gospel was originally designed to illustrate the Spirit of the Hebrew sacred books; it was intended to "open the understanding," in order that the Scriptures might be understood, as expressed in verse 45 of the chapter under consideration.

My only reason for dwelling upon this, is the perfect assurance I feel of the correctness of this interpretation of the story, which is not a history, but a symbolic method of illustrating an invisible mental process; that, by which a perception of the Truth of the sacred books of the Hebrews passed into the minds of those who approached those records in the Spirit of Truth; and I am the more earnest in setting forward this view, because the story is as true to-day as when it was written. The Spirit of Truth alone opens the eyes of those who seek for it, either in the sacred records or elsewhere. This Spirit, under the name of faith, which means fidelity, is as necessary now to an understanding of the Scriptures, as it was in the days of the apostles.

It is not out of place here to remind the admirers of Swedenborg, that he represents the "LORD" as ap-

pearing to him "while reading the Word." We need not doubt that Swedenborg read the Word in the Spirit of Truth, and was thence enabled to see that Spirit in the Word; and that Spirit he calls the LORD, as St. Paul did before him; but he does not mean a *bodily* person. Swedenborg is perpetually warning us that the ancients wrote in Correspondences, which means Hermetic Symbolism, and he adopted a similar style himself in many of his works, especially in the volume on Heaven and Hell. Hence, when he says the LORD appeared to him, we need understand no more than that the Truth appeared to him—the Truth of the Word—which appeared to him, as he says, while reading it. He saw precisely what the disciples saw: not a transient person, but a permanent spiritual reality. But by his manner of stating it, he has thrown an air of mystery over his writings, precisely "corresponding" to that over the story of the disciples going to Emmaus.

I cannot help remarking here that the Jews, except the Essenes, expected, and still expect, the coming of a personal Immanuel, who shall restore the throne of David; an opinion severely condemned by all Christendom: while Christians, for centuries past, have regarded the Immanuel no less as a person, though in the past, and find it as difficult to conceive of the spirituality of the Holy One of Israel as the Jews themselves, except as a risen Saviour who once had a mortal life: an opinion which would seem to be as far from the truth as that of the Jews, and not essentially different

from it, so far as a person enters into the conception. But let us see in the story of the disciples going to Emmaus, simply a pictorial mode of representing by writing a spiritual operation in the soul, and we may ourselves have our "understanding opened," so as to see and know the Holy One of Israel, and may then "understand the Scriptures," both Old and New, for there is but one Spirit in both.

That the story in Luke represents the vanishing of CHRIST, after the disciples had recognized him, may be nothing more than a part of the *formula* assumed by the writer. CHRIST, the Spirit, had been brought forward as a person, and it was necessary to dispose of him. The writer makes him "vanish;" but even this might be interpreted as signifying, that when the true Spirit becomes known to any one, its external representatives lose their importance. As the Spirit increases, the importance of the Letter must decrease (John iii. 30). St. Paul himself disowns the Letter, under the name of CHRIST *in the flesh* (2 Cor. v. 16), because, when the Spirit becomes known, the "schoolmaster," as he calls the same Letter (Gal. iii. 24, 25), is no longer needed. That the "schoolmaster" may be discarded too soon, is very true, as set forth in the 13th chapter of Theologia Germanica, where the same doctrine is very clearly intimated. But the very meaning of the expression, CHRIST *in the flesh*, seems to have been utterly lost out of the Church; and with it, also, the true meaning of CHRIST the Spirit.

For the truth of this interpretation, I would appeal to that class of faithful students of the Scriptures who have sat down to the study of them, conscious of doing so in the Spirit of Truth. This is the sole Spirit which can furnish that sort of evidence of the truth of the Scriptures, which the Scriptures themselves call the "witness of the Spirit." Nothing can exceed the beauty of the representation in this chapter of Luke, through which a prepared Spirit may see the steps by which a sense of the divine truth of the Scriptures passes into the Soul. But this interpretation is not addressed to unbelievers, nor to those who regard the sacred writings in the *Letter* only.

Many of the Fathers, I have said, were allegorists; but for the most part, they appear to have received the miracles as historical, after the time of Papias, when we begin to have something like reliable dates; and yet we may believe that this was often done out of condescension to "babes" in the faith, who must have, it would seem, something for the imagination to rest upon—unable to seize the Spirit. Even St. Paul became all things to all men, to gain some to GOD; allowing those to "eat" [of the meat of animals sacrificed to idols] that would, requiring only a "good conscience;" and so, likewise, with St. Paul, circumcision was nothing, and uncircumcision was nothing; but a spiritual life was everything.

Let it not be said that the author denies the truth of the Scriptures. On the contrary, he affirms their

truth in the strongest manner; but he denies that the truth is seen in the mere letter, and he is endeavoring to suggest a method of interpretation which may bring the truth to light.

If St. Paul could temporize in what he, of course, thought unessential, so might his successors, in accommodation to the "weak," with whom a belief in the miraculous, in that age, was almost a necessity, from ignorance of natural philosophy, and the demands of science generally: for there was nothing deserving the name of science at that period, especially at Jerusalem, the very head-quarters of superstition.

But the state of learning has changed, and it cannot now be denied, that a large portion of the learned modern world are at least lukewarm on the subject of religion; not because of any natural or acquired aversion to the subject itself, but because it is presented to them under conditions which violate their sense of the order of GOD'S providence, and thus derogate from the majesty of the divine Being. Modern infidelity, so called, is as certainly a protest against the errors of mere literalism among the Protestants, as Protestantism itself was a protest against the errors or abuses of Catholicism in the middle ages.

Generally the so-called infidel is not hostile to religion; perhaps never so, but only to the forms of it, when these seem to be absurd and false. Man loves Truth instinctively, and hates falsehood; and it is a libel upon his nature to assert the contrary. Give him Truth, indeed, and if he understands it, he will drink it as the

water of life. Error is only acceptable when it wears the face of truth. A reputed infidelity turns out almost always to be a protest against a real or an apparent falsehood, for Truth is an eternal virgin, and the first love of all mankind; the first-born among many brethren. To wander from it is to love, that is, to worship some mistaken image or shadow of it; and this it is that leads man into the "wilderness;" through and out of which, however, every man carries with him a Moses, a Joshua, a JESUS; a word in the heart, an *angel*, a *prophet*, through whom the pure wine of Truth may be brought to that soul which hungers and thirsts after righteousness; feeding it also with quails and manna from heaven, for these are only other names for the same thing. Joshua is only another name for JESUS, (or JESUS for Joshua), and the *battles of Joshua* represent a symbolic history of the fight of the good and the true against the evil and the false. Except from this point of view, the Anakims are no more to us than the Iroquois.

Wonderful as these Bible teachings are, I see no reason for regarding them as of miraculous or supernatural origin, however much they may surpass the powers of ordinary men to have produced. The writers of the gospels were not ordinary men: they were very extraordinary men, as any one may know who will read Philo's account of the Therapeutæ. CHRIST, I must say, was not a carpenter's son, except in a symbolic sense, as was Hiram, the Builder,—the builder of a House not made with hands. In like manner the fisher-

men were disciples of Truth, seeking the *living* Truth in the great deep, the everlasting ocean of Truth, in which the life of man floats as in "an enchanted boat," (an ark?) borne onward with invisible sails.

In this view there is no particular wish, as I have repeatedly said, to deny the historical. I only say that a history so overloaded with impossibilities, as seen through "sense and reason" (in the language of St. Hilary), however much historical truth it may really contain, incloses much also that is not historical; yet, so far as the seeming historical is herein denied, it is only denied in favor of the spiritual. As mere history, the gospel would be a thing of the past; but as a divine allegory it was designed to teach the ever-living Truth. To hold pertinaciously to the letter or to the literal history, is to lose its significance to the Spirit; and this was the error of the Jewish priesthood in regard to the older Jewish Scriptures: but to yield the letter, not in a spirit of doubt or denial, but in devotion to the Truth, is to find the very Spirit from which the letter proceeded; though it is true, at the same time, that to lose the letter, except in devotion to the Truth (for "my sake," as expressed in the gospel), is to lose both the letter and the Spirit; and this is to wander perpetually in the "dark wood" of Dante. To find the Spirit, and to walk in it, is to find the "Law of the LORD," and "to walk therein,"—and this is to "walk with GOD." When the Law of the LORD is said to be perfect, as we read in the Scripture, the unwritten Law is spoken of: for this both preceded and will

survive the written Law; and this is the eternal Law, the eternal "Word," which St. Paul labored to make known for the purpose of showing its supremacy over the written Law, which he speaks of as a veil, figuratively placing it over the hearts of the Jews (2 Cor. iii. 15); and this veil he tells us is "done away in CHRIST;" that is, in the Spirit, the unwritten Law in the heart, which neither is nor can be anything but the law of a purified CONSCIENCE; and we abuse ourselves and remain in the wilderness while we seek for it elsewhere.

Hence the language: "When a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is *lawful* and *right*, he shall save his soul alive." What is it to do that which is lawful and right? Read all the philosophy that has ever been written on the subject, and in the end the rule is found in the *conscience*, or it is not found at all;—but it must be found in the *conscience* itself, and not as it may be acted upon by any mere passion mistaken for the Spirit itself—the passions being among the "clouds" of nature through which the "SON OF MAN" is seen to descend as out of heaven. It is "the path of the just man" only that "shineth to perfect day," and we are warned to mark the perfect man and behold the *upright;* "for the end of that man is peace."

In a subordinate sense the written Scriptures are the "clouds" through which the "Son of Man" is seen to descend, as out of heaven. But this is a Truth for the Jews, or for those who receive the Hebrew sacred books as divine. It was through these Scriptures that

the disciples of the Truth, going to Emmaus, "communing" of the Truth in the Law and the Prophets, finally recognized that Spirit, because it was in themselves. That is, they recognized the unity of the Spirit, as in themselves and in the sacred writings which had proceeded from the same Spirit. This was the true new-birth for Jews. But we should not forget that the Spirit of Truth preceded Abraham, and all of the records of it; and is able to see itself in those records, because it *was* before them, and is the true judge of them. This was undoubtedly the doctrine of St. Paul, who was of so catholic a spirit that, while he did not impose upon his Gentile converts the Jewish religious ceremonies, neither did he require them as an indispensable duty to withdraw absolutely from Gentile practices, except to forbid everything that had even the appearance of idol-worship. St. Paul taught the Spirit, which was to be seen in or under the Body, the *letter*, which it had itself made; while yet the Body of itself profited nothing, or was worse than nothing without the Spirit; but with the Spirit all ceremonies became harmless. Hence, with St. Paul, circumcision was nothing; and uncircumcision was nothing; and his Gentile converts were at liberty to eat of the flesh offered to idols; only, under all circumstances, whatever was done must be done to the glory of GOD, and with "a good conscience."

SECTION XIV.

A PORTION of the view that I have been endeavoring to present, may be seen, as in an image, in the single case of a father and son. The father, according to his wisdom and experience, stands over the son naturally as the Law. His commands are authoritative over the son, who, while "a child" (Gal. iv. 1), is a servant and bondman to the Law expressed in the father. In process of time the child is supposed to attain maturity and to become capable of understanding the *reason* of his father's commands, which are thence no longer felt as a burden. This process is only extended in a nation. A wise ancestry provides laws and usages, designed to protect the youth of the nation, and to conduct them to the Land of Promise, which is a Holy Land; and this is only another name for Holiness—not a country, but a state of the soul. These laws are written, and stand first in order and authority over the youth, the children of the nation, while needing an external guide. In process of time, those who are capable of it, enter into the Land of Promise, and understand the process by which they have reached the Holy Land. The father as the authoritative Law is the Alpha; and the son,

while he is a "child," is the Omega; I say, as an image: but, in time, the Omega grows into the Alpha, when the authoritative Law, which was first in the beginning, becomes the last; though these are in truth of one and the same nature essentially; just as the father and the son are of one and the same nature. This Spirit of life, personified, says: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; but it is added, the first shall be last, and the last first. And this is a perpetual saying, like many others we meet with in the sacred writings, especially in the prophecies: as in Isa. li. 7, 8, Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart [?] is my Law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

By interpreting such passages as specific prophecies pointing to any merely historical time, we lose a large portion of their beauty and sublimity, and nearly all of their value. They are of universal significance, and are applicable to all time. It is true that Lord Bacon and others have set forward the principle, on the doctrine of progress, that WE (that is, any and every present age) are the old, and our fathers the young of the world. In some cases, no doubt, the children of a nation surpass their fathers in wisdom and in virtue; in all that dignifies and elevates humanity: but whether this indicates a perpetual progress, or a movement in a cycle,

has never been decided, and presents a question not within my purpose to examine.

The Bible, as we see, is a composite volume. To Christians it is divided into the Old and the New Testament, though the Old Testament may be divided into the Law and the Prophets, and other portions may be regarded separately, as histories, sacred poems, &c. The entire volume, however its several parts were composed and embodied as a whole, may be considered as a certain unity, passing through ages and ages of humanity as one unalterable thing; not speaking, however, absolutely: for the Bible, we suppose, had an origin, and has been subject to some mutations and additions. But for ages it may be considered as something fixed, walking, as it were, silently, through the ages, yet performing its appropriate works, its miracles and wonders, upon the human race, which it continues to do. Now, side by side with it in the history of humanity, there has been a Church, undergoing, it is true, various external changes: but, in general, we see an organized church running parallel with the Bible, supported by the Bible, yet bringing the Bible down the stream of time, and the two are destined to pass together to a later period of the world, to which no one can assign any limit.

If I ask myself how these two, the Bible and the Church, are related to each other?—they seem to express a mystical unity, of which the Bible is the Law, and the Church is, or ought to be, the Spirit; and yet I cannot but attribute the Bible to the Church; for

humanity, inclosing the true Church, preceded the volume which has risen in its bosom. But here the Church becomes a mystical being, older than the Scriptures, to which she now appeals: and I seem to see, also, the Church in a double character; its external form becomes the Body, and its internal Life the Spirit. Its forms may change, but its spirit must remain ever one and the same, as certainly as that the nature of man is one. This Spirit is a perpetual priest after the order of Melchisedec: without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; and truly this Spirit is "like unto the Son of GOD" (Heb. vii. 3).

Now, such matters have been written about in former ages by personifying the principles involved in them; calling the Church a mother, the mother of faith; while yet the Church, externally, is a product of faith. Faith, which in principle means fidelity, and also righteousness, is the daughter of the Church. But the Spirit of the Church is, at the same time, the Church itself, the Father of the Church and the Son of the Church; and the Church is no less the mother of that very Spirit which is its own mystical Father, these seemingly contradictory sayings expressing certain relations which may be seen by contemplating them in the order of time, in which a cause appears as an effect, and then in its turn assumes the character of a cause; as a Church, erected by the faith of one generation, becomes (instrumentally) the cause of faith in another: and yet all of them coexist in Life, the One all-in-all, in which time-ele-

ments are seen to have only a relative significance, and lose their absolute importance. In this region the spirit of disputation dies out, contradictions disappear, and the soul, if faithful, rests in the peace of GOD.

John has represented something of this in the mystical sayings of the Baptist—of one coming after him being preferred before him (chapter i. verse 30), in the next verse giving as the reason, that he was before him; that is, as I have already explained, John is the water or letter of Scripture, a product from the Spirit in time, whereas CHRIST is the living water, or life-spirit, which was before the Scriptures, and then comes to the phenomenal man after them. But these things have no external existence, otherwise than as they appear in nature itself in all time, and can only be represented in persons by means of mythical histories.

I repeat, that much of the Bible is written about these *principles*, personified; but I say, also, that the true Spirit has never been imaged in writing so as to be recognized as historic, for it is not directly representable as ordinary history. Hence, it must be said that the real New Covenant is not the written New Testament, but is forever new; and every preacher of the gospel is a representative of it; but he represents it only according to the measure of the truth in him. A faithful preacher is an image of the truth, and fills the highest office known to humanity. His office is sacred, and he shares its sanctity by fidelity to it; yet not to the letter, which is the office of a clerk or a copyist, but to the Spirit, which is the office of a priest.

We may see very clearly in our time that the most effective preaching proceeds from a class of independent clergymen, who have measurably separated themselves from strict creeds, and gained freedom in what are called Congregational Churches, where much that is heard is almost confessedly an inspiration of nature, which, indeed, stands among all men "unknown," and, though coming after, is yet preferred before him who baptizes with the letter only. This is not to disown the Bible, and much less CHRIST; but rather to fulfill, or reassert, the very office of CHRIST; who is said to have brought grace and truth into the world, because he preached grace and truth, that is, the Spirit before the letter. The whole life of CHRIST—a symbolic fulfillment of the Scriptures—is a protest against the letter of the Scriptures, and the same Spirit must now place his own histories with the older letter, and preach CHRIST in the Spirit. Those who gave us the histories of CHRIST had a higher ideal of life than any work in the world can furnish—better than their own histories can furnish, when they are seen in *water* only.

As personalities or personifications, *Moses* stands for the written Law, and CHRIST for the unwritten Law, that is, for grace and truth; but the unwritten Law is the *Spirit* of the written Law, which originally came from and was founded in the unwritten Law. Hence, there is a particular beauty in regarding the written Scriptures as an animate creature, having a body and a soul,—water and spirit,—flesh and blood,—bread and wine,—loaves and fishes; these all meaning the

same thing; and all of them are represented by CHRIST —a mysterious principle personified, but in no wise a person, as historically represented. He comes *now*, after his own letter, and is preferred before it, because he was before it. When CHRIST was represented as teaching, there was no written New Testament; and then the Old Testament was the water of Jacob's well, —which did not fully quench the thirst; and as it did not then quench the thirst, so, neither does it now,— so long as it is regarded in the letter. But it was originally a water that did quench the thirst: and this was the "living water," the Spirit under the Letter, which CHRIST taught.

But this was the doctrine of the Essenes, and nearly the whole of Philo's works are written from this point of view. The New Testament, having been added to the Old, the two now represent the water of Jacob's well; and we, of this age, need the same Spirit for understanding the whole, that was once necessary for reading the Old Testament by itself. This Spirit has never been a historical person, nor does it depend upon a historical event. It exists as the eternal Word with GOD for evermore, and can never be a thing of the past, and become a historical record. It is a writing on the heart, as expressed in Jeremiah, and by this means GOD preserves it from desecration from "generation to generation," as expressed in Isaiah. This is the corner-stone in Zion; and this is the mysterious secret of the Holy of Holies in the Sacred Temple. To find this secret is to recover the so-called lost Word—which

cannot be lost, or, when lost, it may be found again by *following* CHRIST, the Spirit of Truth, whose voice is not a written word, but a living voice in the soul; and when this voice is heard and obeyed in any human soul, the time has "come" in that soul, predicted by Jeremiah.

There is much reason to believe that the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah xxxi. 31–34, was misunderstood in the days of the Apostles. The verses read as follows:

31. Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Jacob:

32. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the days that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their GOD, and they shall be my people.

34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Here would seem to be a promise, or a prediction—behold, the days come, &c.—but as with GOD a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day, it is impossible to determine how near or how remote the time was to which the prophecy referred. As we look back historically from the present time, we may feel very sure that the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled in the world at large, though it may have been accomplished in the lives of individuals in every age, and may now be in fulfillment in the lives of many individuals. If we suppose this prophecy to refer to a period of the world-history, or liable to be so interpreted, and then look into the New Testament, we shall see very decided evidence that some of the writers thought the "days" had "come" when the prophecy was to be fulfilled.

The first indication of this occurs in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, in the former at chapter xxiv. in the latter at chapter xxi. We next see it in several passages of the Epistles of St. Paul, in one of which the Apostle expressly declares that "we shall not all sleep," &c.: for, as St. Paul saw the matter, some that were then living were to be "taken up alive in the clouds," 1 Thes. iv. 17, &c. But in neither of these passages is there any express reference to the prediction in Jeremiah.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, however, the writer, in the *eighth chapter*, recites the promise of Jeremiah; and the whole tenor of the epistle shows that he thought the time had really arrived for its fulfillment;

that the old law was done away, and that the HEBREWS, whom the writer addresses, clearly not the Jewish nation, were to live under the *law in the heart*, the new covenant, predicted by Jeremiah; and one of the principal objects of the writer was to exhort those he addressed to be faithful "to the end." There is no appearance in this epistle of a claim to supernatural light. Whoever was the author, he was a Jew, or Jewish Christian, and saw nothing beyond the Jewish people. The epistle is full of argument and exhortation based upon the Jewish Scriptures and traditions. It is one of the most solemn and impressive of all the epistles of the New Testament. The aim of the writer to assimilate, in character, the High Priest of the Hebrew sect, to that of Melchisedec, is very remarkable. The latter is described as "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the SON OF GOD," abiding a priest continually. But we must observe that the writer had no personal knowledge of the High Priest, of whom so much is said; that is, no knowledge of him as a person. His faith was grounded in a full and apparently a literal belief in the Old Testament, the records of which are freely used; and, next, in an opinion that one portion of ancient prophecy had been then recently fulfilled; though for this opinion he depended upon a tradition expressed in these words: "which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him:"—not that the writer himself was a wit-

ness of anything connected with the advent of CHRIST. Another opinion pointed to the expectation of some termination of the world, in accordance with the opinions which seem to have been prevalent at that time.

The tone of this epistle is extremely affecting and unearthly. It is that of one who wrote as if he thought, indeed, that the last time had arrived, or was near at hand.

This opinion is not only seen in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, in the Epistles of St. Paul, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it is most emphatically declared in the 1st Epistle of Peter, iv. 7: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer:"—as if the event might be expected at any moment. If this be construed as referring to the end of the world, we know that the apostles were mistaken; but if it be regarded as referring to that event which is "appointed" for all men, then, indeed, the "time is at hand" now, as it was, and will be, "world without end."

As I read the records, it appears indisputable, that the writers really thought the great world near its "end," when they wrote; and equally certain that this opinion had no little influence upon their writings: but now, while this opinion was not true, in regard to the macrocosm, it was true, and is yet true, with regard to the microcosm: for every man lives on the borders of the invisible world, from which he is separated by the thinnest of veils; which, in the estimate of some, may be pierced even in this life. A vision of this, in some

form or other, is calculated more than anything else in the world, to awaken the soul to a right understanding of the Law, both as it reads in the records and as it is in the Spirit from which the law originally proceeded.

It is said that the fear of GOD is the beginning of wisdom; and it is perhaps no less true, that the fear of GOD often arises upon the contemplation of death,—the "end" of the phenomenal world. This is the reason why, in some secret societies, having a sacred purpose, the initiate is first brought into close contact with dead men's bones, and other evidences of mortality, as a prelude to that light which is the symbol of immortality.

It is of the utmost importance in reading the Scriptures to bear in mind the double character of the Law, written and unwritten, of which I have said so much; especially in reading the Psalms; for in a multitude of instances the unwritten Law is called the LORD. The LORD is that Law; and "Blessed are they whose GOD is the LORD." These are the righteous also who are told "to rejoice before God," and to "exceedingly rejoice." The Kingdom of Heaven is a Kingdom of righteousness. It is not a place, but a state of the soul. This is the New Jerusalem, the Land of Promise for those who keep the covenant.

The entire man is often spoken of in Scripture as a whole people; and the "prophet," as I have repeatedly said, which is to arise among the "brethren," is the SPIRIT OF TRUTH rising among the other spiritual prin-

ciples in man; thoughts, passions, and affections of all sorts.

The command to worship one GOD is a command to obey the one SPIRIT OF TRUTH: the LORD is to be GOD —"Blessed are they whose GOD is the LORD." To be led by any other principle or spirit, is idolatry, or the worship of a false God; not that any passion is essentially evil in itself, but only when, from being a servant, it becomes a master.

The "Comforter," promised in the New Testament, called also the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, is a repetition of the promise of the *Angel* in the Old Testament, or the promise of the *Prophet*, to rise in the midst of the brethren. This is the Spirit which will lead its possessors into all Truth, John xvi. 13, meaning, as I have said, of itself; for it does not teach geometry or astronomy; and by teaching the *nature* of itself it will teach the *nature* of CHRIST; for CHRIST is that Spirit: —hence it is said, that it will *recall* all the words of JESUS, John xiv. 26.

We may suppose it a favorite idea of the author of the fourth gospel, that the Spirit of Truth is the MESSIAS; for we see that the woman at the well, (the Church at the Scriptures?) chapter iv. 25, is made to assign to the MESSIAS the same office that, in chapter xiv. 26, is assigned to the Spirit of Truth: "I know," says the woman, "that MESSIAS cometh, which is called CHRIST: when he is come he will tell us all things." This was said before CHRIST had made himself known to the woman, and before he had indicated anything as

to the office of the Spirit of Truth. The idea was therefore neither in CHRIST, as a person, nor in the woman, as a person. It indicates only the opinion of the writer of the gospel on a particular point, and he has simply given us a varied expression of it.

There is a principle by which the teachings of CHRIST may be brought to "remembrance" even at this day, and throughout all time, which I will illustrate by a simple case; observing, however, that I have no design or desire to disparage the Spirit of Truth by comparing it with any subordinate principle. With this remark I say, then, that Euclid, if he had pleased, after having demonstrated his principles of geometry, might have personified what I will call the Spirit of Science, and, by giving it a biography, might have represented it as saying—Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to my father; but then I will send the Spirit of Science to you, and he shall bring to your "remembrance" all of the demonstrations you have heard from me. This sort of scientific remembrance is what Plato calls reminiscence, distinguishing it from the memory of external things; and very properly so: for a scientific mind, though memory is needful to it, does not depend upon memory for the principles of science. These principles exist in the reason and not in the memory, and they are developed in and from the reason in an invariable manner; so that if all the books of geometry in the world were to be de-

stroyed, the same science would be re-written by some other mind or minds imbued with the scientific spirit.

In a somewhat similar manner, the SPIRIT of TRUTH is a reality; and all men who are imbued with it, and who live with fidelity to it, have within themselves the workings of that Spirit, and in such a manner as to bring, as it were, to their "remembrance" the teachings of those who have gone before them with respect to the same Spirit. But as in science very few become eminently distinguished as discoverers, so in regard to the Spirit of Truth, there are but few leaders in the world. And again, as a scientific spirit is aided in the development of science within itself by the writings of those who have gone before it, so, with regard to the Spirit of Truth, the writings of others may assist in bringing this Spirit to light within the seeker after righteousness. For this purpose there is no book in the world that can be compared to the Bible; and, of the Bible, no portion of it that can be compared to the gospels. To make any progress in this species of Truth, it is necessary to be devoted to it, to live with it; or, as the gospel itself expresses it, it is necessary to obey or "do" the bidding of Truth. A false man is necessarily debarred from it—at all events so long as he clings to his idol, whatever it may be. The reason why the love of CHRIST is the root of a truly divine life, is because CHRIST is the SPIRIT of TRUTH personified, and the impersonation was made by the most spiritual body of men the world has ever seen.

It may be imagined that this view cannot possibly reach what are supposed to be the revelations of a future world in the gospels; but according to my reading of the gospels, I find in them no specific revelations of the future; but only general intimations of an immortal life, in harmony with the opinions of all of the ancient sects of philosophy, that of Epicurus excepted. I say sects of philosophy, to exclude a few scattered individuals here and there who held extravagant opinions. In a future life CHRIST indeed indicates that the sheep are to be separated from the goats; but this has been the instinctive apprehension of all ages, and has its proper place even in Plato's Republic; but of the specific nature of the life of the good, CHRIST gives us no light, I mean no specific revelation. When questioned, as in Matt. xxii., as to the woman who had been the wife of seven brothers, the answer is negative and not positive. We are told that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of GOD in heaven. The relations of life, then, it would seem, are all broken up in the resurrection; for to say that there is no marrying nor giving in marriage is only a mode of saying that there are no parents, no children, no brothers, no sisters; and as to being like the angels of GOD in heaven, since we know nothing of their state, we know nothing of the state of those in the resurrection. We assume that the angels of GOD are in some perfect state; but we know nothing of it, I mean from this revelation. We may conclude from the answer of

Jesus, that the woman was not the wife of any one of the seven brothers in the resurrection; but this is all.

On the other hand, such expressions as hell, hell-fire, the worm that never dieth, and the like—these are so manifestly metaphorical that nothing is to be concluded from them but that the wicked are destined to some inconceivable sufferings—figured in the pagan world by pictures of Tartarus; of Ixion on his wheel, Sisyphus rolling his stone, &c.

St. Paul, as if speaking with the authority of Holy Writ, tells us that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him; but he does not tell us what the things are:—and even that they are good, is rather an inference of our own instinct than a result of any positive Scriptural revelation. We are merely told that we know not what the "things" are, and this can only confirm us in our ignorance. In such generalities I do not recognize a specific result, and am forced to conclude that it lay beyond the field, that is, beyond the power of the writers to give us any; and that on this particular question the *written* revelation leaves us where it finds us. St. Paul himself, after quoting the letter of Scripture, as above, for the seeming purpose of shutting out all inquiry in that direction, appeals to the Spirit as having revealed a truth which the letter cannot give (1 Cor. ii. 10); and this is in keeping with the whole of his preaching. But whatever Spirit was accessible to St. Paul is accessible to all men, as he himself teaches, his preaching to the Gen-

tiles being the practical proof of his opinion on this point.

In the 2d Epistle to Timothy, i. 10, where St. Paul speaks of immortality as having been brought to light by JESUS CHRIST, it is added—through the gospel; which means through the TRUTH. We are not to suppose that immortality can be taught by an oral word, but it is brought to light by the Truth. If it could be taught as an oral doctrine, the ancient philosophers taught it as emphatically as the written gospel itself. The reference by St. Paul is not to an authoritative person, but to the Spirit of Truth. In the language of John, referring to this very point, we read: "It is the *Spirit* that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth" (1 John v. 6). The often quoted 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, though the language may seem to be positive, the *ideas* are altogether indefinite, if not contradictory. No one has any idea of an incorruptible body, the idea of body being necessarily that of a composite thing, subject to dissolution, that is, to death; for death is dissolution.

As to the scene of the resurrection itself, it does not teach the immortality of man, but only that of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, which cannot die. According to the tenor of the relation, literally understood, it can only prove the immortality of a being described as the SON OF GOD, by a mortal woman. It establishes nothing for that of man, who is not, even upon the commonly-received opinion, such a person as CHRIST, who had no human father. But now a being without a human

father cannot be a human being in any sense which we can understand. No man has, or can have, any conception whatever of such a being, and language descriptive of so anomalous a being can have no intelligible (literal) sense. We have only to examine this story with innocent candor, and its external form must necessarily be dissolved, and must then pass into the region of shadows, or be converted into a divine myth for teaching or illustrating invisible principles.

SECTION XV.

THE Bible is full of symbolism. At first it is not easy to see it, but by practice and study, the letter falls into the shade, and the Spirit "comes forth," provided the study is entered upon in a right Spirit, a Spirit of Truth. The truth of the Bible then becomes its own support, its own testimony of itself. Miracles cannot prove it, neither could miracles overthrow it. It lives by a life of its own. "Saving faith" is not a historical belief of it upon testimony, nor upon the credit of miracles; but it is the knowledge of its Spirit, its Soul, its CHRIST; and this is at last seen to be eternal, and becomes the certainty of the immortality of the soul, the life of which is CHRIST. The mystery is to know it, and this, it is said, is not of the will of man; and this is true, even of that elementary disposition to seek the Truth in the Spirit of Truth. The incipient impulse to seek the truth is a species of inspiration; and whoever is conscious of such a disposition, in its pure simplicity, may confidently trust that CHRIST is calling to him to enter into a spiritual life.

The metaphorical character of the language of Scripture, though often asserted, and though examples

of it have been often adduced, is very far from being generally understood. Hence, in many cases, what is said in figurative language of the soul of man, is understood as if said of external phenomena, simply because the soul being unseen, visible objects are made use of to symbolize or to figure it. In all that is said in Isaiah, chapters xxxiv. and xxxv., for example, the soul of man is the *country* spoken of; in the one case the false man, upon whom the "vengeance of the LORD" is poured. In this false soul,

> The streams shall be turned into pitch, the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

Nothing of all this is said of any visible place on the face of the earth; but it is a highly-wrought metaphor-

ical picture of a soul abandoned to an evil life, in forgetfulness of the LORD OF TRUTH. Such a soul must lie "waste" for ever and ever; that is, so long as its state or condition continues. This language, "for ever and ever," does not affirm the perpetuity of any particular state of the soul; but declares the perpetuity of the principle which determines the lost and waste condition of a soul, while in the state here described.

But the prophet then pictures another class of men, or another condition of soul; a soul that has sought out and read the "Book of the Lord." Such a soul declares that "the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our Law-giver, the LORD is our king; he will save us." Now this LORD must be understood to be the *Angel*, and the *Prophet*, and the *Law in the heart* spoken of by Moses, and recognized by St. Paul as the Spiritual CHRIST, whose power of action in the soul is illustrated in the mythical history of JESUS.

Of those who seek and read, that is, understand and obey this Spirit, Isaiah says, speaking in the name of the LORD:—And every man who speaks the "Truth in love," may claim, with Isaiah or St. Paul, to speak in the name of the LORD; for it is only a mode of calling the LORD to witness that he speaks the Truth. But we should always remember that, in all such cases, it is not GOD who speaks, but it is man speaking from his highest convictions. Thus, Isaiah continues, speaking in the name of the Lord:

No one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered

them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

The wilderness and the desert here described is a human soul destitute of the TRUTH; but the presence of TRUTH is to work spiritual wonders. A soul visited by it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our GOD.

With something like an incoherency, the prophet then seems to address the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, as if prompting it what it is to say and do:

Strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a feeble heart—Be strong, fear not: behold, your GOD will come with vengeance, even GOD with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind [in understanding] shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf [in understanding] shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man [who walks with "the crutch of tradition"] leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb [the ignorant] shall sing: For in the wilderness [of the natural man] shall waters break out, and streams [the "living waters" and streams of Truth] in the desert. And the parched ground of the soul] shall become a pool, and the thirsty land [the soul thirsty for truth] springs of water: in the habitation of dragons [evil passions], where each lay shall be grass [fresh feelings],

with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness [in the soul]; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those [that is, for *those* who have sought out, and read, and lived according to the LAW of the LORD]: the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein. No lion [domineering passion] shall be there, nor any ravenous beast [brutal propensity] shall go up thereon [in such a soul], it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion [the Supreme Truth, the spiritual life], with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

No part of this is a prophecy of any particular time, or place, or person; but it is a highly figurative and metaphorical picture of contrasted states of the soul of man; one, given over to an evil life, becoming a wilderness and a desert, where the cormorant and the bittern shall dwell, the screech-owl and the raven: the other, a soul where the TRUTH has taken up its abode, and made that wilderness to blossom as the rose, where there shall be no ravenous beast; and these are called the ransomed of the LORD, who shall obtain joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

If the language of Isaiah is supposed to point to places on the earth, which are to be "for ever and ever," then, it may be asked, where are they, or where have they ever been seen; and to what purpose, or for what object were such descriptions made? But apply this descriptive language to the souls of men in con-

trasted states, as they are buried in sin, or clothed with righteousness, and nothing can exceed its supreme beauty or surpass its awful truthfulness.

It is common in the Scriptures to speak of the inward nature of man by the symbols of birds (as thoughts), and various animals (as passions, affections, or states). Thus, the dove signifies truth, and the lamb signifies innocence; while the lion represents some towering passion, &c. If we read of a time when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together—this is not to be understood of the outer world, for that time shall never come. The reference is to a time when the soul shall be subdued to harmony in the Truth of GOD. Then the lions become tame, and lie down with the lamb. The lion that Samson *kills* is some dominant passion; and the "honey" found afterwards in the carcase may teach us that, whoever masters an unlawful passion, reaps an adequate reward in the sweet influences which every exercise of virtue throws over the spiritual life: and this is so ordered by Providence, that the "honey" seems to have its very birth in the carcase of the destroyed passion. We may note further of this story of Samson, that it was a harlot that took away his strength, and left him helpless in the power of his enemies. The story of Samson is a parable, and, as such, it has a clear and distinct meaning; but as a history it is most absurd and ridiculous nonsense; and those who preach the literal sense are assuredly fostering a spirit of contempt toward the Scrip-

tures. This spirit of contempt was formerly, as was supposed, liable to be directed against the arcane mysteries, or hidden sense of the letter, which, therefore, was kept carefully concealed. But the time has come when that contempt is openly directed against the literal sense of the Scriptures, and is daily and hourly manifesting the infidelity generated by this literal sense. Except in the presence of a clergyman, where good taste and common civility impose silence, nothing is more common than to hear Scripture quoted with a sneer of derision, or a smile of contempt. This exactly represents the condition of the supposititious child described in Plato's Republic, who had been brought up under fictitious parents; had discovered the cheat and lost his respect for them; but had not yet found his true parents. Nothing but my deep conviction of the truth of this view has nerved me to the point of printing this book, the object of which is to direct the attention of the ingenious and ingenuous to the underlying mysteries of the Scriptures, in the hope of rendering an important service to a large class of thinking men and women, who see the fiction of the letter, but do not perceive the kernel of truth inclosed within it. My motto is, that of CHRIST. It is the Spirit (the Truth) that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.

The Scriptures, I repeat, are full of figurative language, and to be absolutely convinced of the necessity of interpreting the letter into reality, we need only read the concluding verses of Mark's Gospel. After

the command to preach the gospel to every creature, it is promised: And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

The necessity of escaping from the evident consequences of this language in Mark, literally understood, has induced the plea that the promise was confined to the time of the apostles—but the promise was not to the apostles, but to *believers:* and the promise was undoubtedly intended for all time; but if it is to be taken literally, there is not a believer now in existence! for who can do these wonders? But if we understand that, by the power of Truth the bad passions may be expelled as *devils;* that the Truth gives a new tongue to the *false;* that the Truth is a protection against wicked men, who may be called *serpents;* and no less against the poison of a false doctrine, which is *deadly drink;* and that the same principle is a cure for moral disorders and sicknesses of all kinds; then, there may be many believers in the world, and some will be found among the most humble and the poor of the earth, who may nevertheless be rich in the Spirit. If any one is disposed to test this, let him solemnly resolve, in the depths of his heart, to live a perfectly true life for a twelvemonth, doing nothing against his sense of truth, and complying strictly with all of its inward monitions, and then let him say what he thinks of it. He is not

called upon to disturb others beyond the force of his example, and, if unexpectedly he finds himself in a crowd bent upon evil, let him follow a great example, and walk out "through their midst." But I must not let this allusion pass without remarking that where this expression is used in Luke iv. 30, it means infinitely more than anything the senses can witness. It signifies that the Truth cannot be harmed; but when men aim to do wrong, truth "passes" from them, "through their MIDST;" and then it may be said, figuratively, that they are *possessed* of *devils*, which it is the office of Truth, again, in its own time, to "cast out."

The 16th chapter of Matthew furnishes a plain argument against the reality of the two miracles of feeding the multitude (the five thousand and the four thousand) with a few loaves and fishes, and it is of great importance; because, if we can clearly see a case in the gospel itself of a symbolic interpretation, we may consider that we have direct authority for it in understanding other miracles in the same spirit. This point deserves particular examination.

In this 16th chapter of Matthew, CHRIST warns his disciples, whom I suppose to have been Essenes, against "the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." This his followers could not understand (verse 7). He then instructs them as to his meaning, by reminding them of the two miracles, by which thousands were fed with a few loaves and fishes, and he exclaims: How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not of

bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the DOCTRINE of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (verses 11, 12).

This is exceedingly instructive, if we choose to profit by it. It is as plain as the noon-day sun, that the miracles of feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes were symbolic (written or spoken) miracles, to show that *Doctrine*, that is TRUTH, may feed thousands and not be diminished. If the two miracles had been performed with actual *bread*, a reference to them could not have instructed the disciples that by the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was to be understood DOCTRINE. The five and the four thousand, then, were fed upon Doctrine; and undoubtedly this was not the doctrine of the two recognized sects, and the only other doctrine that we know anything about among the Jews was that of the Essenes. This doctrine was to the Essenes the *bread of life*, and this is CHRIST, as the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, personified in JESUS. There was no miracle in the case, and we need see nothing in the story but an example of the Essene mode of symbolic teaching; and symbolism was resorted to because the writers of the gospels, like modern Masons, were under the most solemn oath not to reveal openly their doctrines; not to throw pearls to swine, and not to give the children's bread, that is, the Essene doctrine of the Spirit, to the dogs; and who were the dogs but the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who had buried the truth

in their ceremonies and traditions (Matt. vii. 6)? Even St. Paul warns the Philippians to beware of dogs, no doubt in this same sense (chapter iii. verse 2). The initiated and instructed were the *brethren*, the *saints*, the *children*; while the uninitiated were the *without*, the *dogs* (the *cowans*).

[Since writing the above, it has been suggested that the reference by JESUS to the two miracles was designed as a rebuke to the disciples for the uneasiness implied in verse 5, because they had "forgotten to take bread;" as if they ought to have known that he could supply a want of that kind without limit. But we might rather conclude that the allusion to the want of bread (verse 5), was artistically introduced for the express purpose of furnishing an occasion to point out the true character of the miracles. The course of the teaching is this: verse 5 contains the allusion to the want of bread; verse 6 contains the distinct caution against the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees; verse 7 shows that this allusion to *leaven* was precisely what the disciples misunderstood, supposing that it referred to bread; verse 8 contains the rebuke, directed expressly against this precise misunderstanding; verses 9 and 10 remind the disciples of the miracle, and verse 11 shows that the object of this reference to the miracles was to correct the mistake of the disciples in supposing that the caution had any reference to bread—JESUS following up the allusion to the miracles, by expressly instructing the disciples that it was to teach them that

"he spake it not concerning bread;" and lastly, verse 12 shows that the disciples then made the intended inference: "how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the Doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees:" and in the truth of this inference JESUS allows them to remain, making no further explanation. As the record has come down to us, the inference is imperative that the feeding of the multitudes with a few loaves and fishes were symbolic parables, and not miracles, the multitudes having been fed with Doctrine; a single word of Truth being capable of feeding thousands without diminution.

We see very plainly how this operates in truths of science. An important truth takes possession of a single mind—as we see it did, for example, in the case of Sir Isaac Newton. That Truth, as a *leaven*, has penetrated the whole modern world, and may be said rather to have increased than to have been diminished by the millions that have been fed by it. Now, all Truth is of this nature; and this is what the two miracles, regarded as parables, were designed to teach; only we must see in them Jewish teaching concerning the Hebrew Scriptures, which the Essenes regarded as containing an external and an internal sense, figured by *loaves* and *fishes*. From this point of view the teaching is very beautiful:—but the miracles, if taken literally, really teach nothing at all, and are only addressed to our faculty for the marvelous. Seen from this latter point of view, what are these miracles but the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, which we are warned to beware of?

Let us, then, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, and follow the SPIRIT of TRUTH, which made St. Paul free. This Leaven of the Sadducees and of the Pharisees was, in St. Paul's view, the Hagar of the allegory of Abraham and his two wives; and hence he said that Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children; that is, the SPIRIT of TRUTH, in St. Paul's view, was buried by the priesthood in Jerusalem under an oppressive ceremonial law; and this was undoubtedly the opinion of the Essenes whose *leaven* was the SPIRIT of TRUTH, the office of which was to relieve those who might attain to it from "the bondage of the Law,"—not by an uncontrollable license or liberty from the Law, but by enabling its followers to give an intelligent obedience to it, founded upon a knowledge of the Spirit of the Law; and this is CHRIST now, as it was before Abraham.

I will repeat here, before closing this section, that miracles cannot teach or certify the character of the worker of them, beyond the single point, that he may have an extraordinary power; but whether that power be at the disposal of a beneficent or malevolent being, the working of miracles cannot establish. The doing of good by miracles is no security against the suspicion of an underlying purpose of ultimate deception. When CHRIST asks for faith in himself, because he does the works of the Father (John x. 38), he does not appeal to external miracles, as we may be very certain by this

simple consideration, that the appeal implies that those he addressed were already acquainted with the Father, and with his works. Now the assumed object of CHRIST'S coming was to reveal the Father; to reveal the very knowledge his appeal supposes already in those he addressed. He says first, believe me for mine own sake; but next, if you will not believe in me for my own sake, then believe in me for the works' sake. What now is the true meaning of this appeal to the followers of the SPIRIT of TRUTH? It is plainly this: CHRIST speaks in the name of the Spirit of Truth. He was set forward for that purpose among others by those who had a transcendent conception of that Spirit. That Spirit has indeed and in fact a species of supernatural power in the soul where it finds entertainment—where it finds reception. It works moral miracles, that is, moral wonders in such a soul; and the appeal by CHRIST was designed to awaken the conviction that the workings of so blessed a power must needs be divine, since it does the works of the Father,—the soul which is conscious of such works being instinctively conscious, at the same time, that such works are the very works of the Father. The appeal is first to the Spirit of Truth itself; that is, believe me for mine own sake; but next, if you cannot recognize the divinity of this Spirit in itself, then observe its works (in the soul) and believe for the works' sake. In other words, *do* and you shall *know*, &c.

Much of this mode of speaking by CHRIST may be translated by simply giving a tongue, as it were, to the

conscience, and then listening to what it says. Hearken to me, it says: I speak not of myself; I speak only the words I hear from my Father. If you love me, you will keep my commandments, and then you shall know whether the doctrine I teach be of myself or of the Father that sent me. Then you shall know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice. Obey my voice, and then we shall all be one; as the Father is in me, and I in the Father, that you also may be one in us. The words that I speak, they are spirit and they are life. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Take my yoke, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

This yoke is easy when the soul acts from within outwards; but it is a burden when the duty is imposed from without, whether it be in the name of Moses or that of CHRIST.* In the passages above recited, I suppose the conscience is simply personified in CHRIST. In

* In Meister's Travels, he who personates a character loaded with traditions and external rules is called the "Porter."

the Proverbs the same principle speaks in the character of wisdom personified. My son, if thou wilt receive my words [these are the words of CHRIST in the Spirit], and hide my commandments with thee [the commandments of CHRIST], * * then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord [the same CHRIST]; and find the knowledge of GOD [that is, the knowledge of the Father]. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. To those who do not listen, what is the language? Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you.

Something similar to this is taught in the parable of the marriage of the king's son (Matt. xxii). The Spirit of Truth is ever abroad, *calling* all men to the marriage feast; and as many as do not obey are "destroyed;" while of those who present themselves at the feast, if one is found not clothed in "wedding garments," he is disowned and sent away into "outer darkness:" and what are the "wedding garments," in which the guests must appear at the marriage-feast of the Son, but the fruits of the Spirit, the Son, as described by St. Paul (Gal. v. 22, 23), and summed up in Phil. i. 11, as the fruits of righteousness? for righteousness and CHRIST are one.

In both portions of Scripture, the same Spirit speaks. That an actual person or persons used the language is true, of course, or we should not find it written; but that the speaker or writer in either case was above humanity we need not suppose. It is not of primary importance to know by whom or when the language was used, for this is a question of mere history; but it is of unspeakable importance to recognize the Spirit of the language. That Spirit is CHRIST; the wine of the water, the blood of the flesh, the spirit of the letter; and this every man must find in himself, or he will never find it without him. The necessity for this is what makes prayer of so much importance; for, in view of this, meditation may be called prayer. To meditate upon the written word in order to discover its true sense, its source in life—the unwritten word—and its application to life, is undoubtedly a species of prayer. Pray, then, I would say to the literal reader; pray that your understanding may be opened, as was the understanding of the eleven by the Spirit of Truth (Luke xxiv. 45), in order that, like them, you "may understand the Scriptures"—both Old and New—the New, as I have repeatedly said, being an interpretation of the Old, manifesting, not a progress of the Truth, but a progress of man in Truth; for though wisdom does not grow, man may "grow in wisdom," even as CHRIST did.

SECTION XVI.

THE first recorded controversies in the Church, out of the New Testament—for there were controversies among the disciples, Paul "withstanding" Peter, and quarreling with Barnabas,—appear to have been as to the person of JESUS. I assume that, with the Essenes, he was not a person, in the miraculous portion of his history: but a personification: not but that there was, or might have been, a real person around whom the myth was thrown. But the real person was a man, for we know nothing of any person or any being above man in the universe except GOD, and GOD is infinitely inexpressible in the visible form of man, except that man, as the image of God, is said to "participate" in the divine nature. The myth clothes the man with an ideal history, constituting, as a whole, a divine parable; and for the purpose of teaching, there is no more need of a real history underlying it, than in the episodical parables within the history, such as the story of the Prodigal Son. In process of time, as I repeat, the myth passed into an accredited history in the popular mind, which brought about a controversy as to the person of JESUS.

For ages the Christian world has been taught to look upon those who sought to retain the *idea*, and not cumber it with an extravagant and impossible history, as heretics and infidels.

Hence the character of the Gnostics, and of the Marcionites and others, who were called heresiarchs, because they were shocked with the story, literally understood, of a carnal cohabitation of the eternal God with a mortal woman, howsoever delicately covered over with specious words. But they were outnumbered and outvoted in a question where it is quite possible that the opinion of one single man of insight may be worth that of many thousands of ordinary men. The tendency of the mind seems always to be to give prominence to the visible, and in the same proportion to deny the invisible; and this tendency culminates in the tragedy on Mount Calvary, for it kills the Spirit.

Then arise such men as *Isaiah*, who, trumpet-tongued, call men back to simpleness and truth. The "Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah i. 4), is not a historical person, but the Spiritual CHRIST in every man; and this Holy One is always in danger of being smothered with external observances; then, as I say, an Isaiah rises and cries out:

> To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: [and the Lord is the Spirit of Truth, finding utterance through Isaiah.] I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts?

We need not search far to know who had required this; for these things *had been* required by the assumed prophet of GOD, *Moses* himself. Isaiah was a reformer, then; one of the boldest that ever raised his voice against superstitious observances having the seeming sanction of GOD, and consecrated by immemorial usage. Let us listen to him:

Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

And what is the improvement upon all this, commanded by *Isaiah?*

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Almost the entire book of *Isaiah* is a cry to "turn" away from evil to good; but like all Scripture writers the prophet uses metaphorical language:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the GOD of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

In all this I see but one object or purpose. The last days are the last days of every man; not the end of the world, but the close of a phenomenal life, which comes to every man. Man is called the Lord's house. He is sometimes called the Temple of GOD. In this house, as we read, there is the mountain of the Lord, which shall be exalted above all other internal principles in man; or, as it is expressed in the New Testament, to this principle, every knee shall bow. The same man is the house of the God of Jacob; and the mountain is the Lord, and it is the Angel, the Prophet, the Word in the heart, which shall "teach" the way of Truth; in the same man is Zion, for this is the same mountain, from which shall go forth the same law, the "word of the Lord" from "Jerusalem;" and Jerusalem is the same man, the Jerusalem that St. Paul saw in bondage.

If we do not bring these sayings home to ourselves; if we do not realize their application to us, and appro-

priate them, we might as well hear them in a language wholly unknown to us.

An individual, looking upon the entire volume, the Bible, is apt to measure the possibility of writing such a book by the sense he may have of his own inability to have produced it; and hence he may readily fall into the notion of a supernatural agency in its production. But we should consider that the Bible is not the product of an individual, but that of a whole people, expressing the *Spirit* of ages. Besides, individuals are rarely capable of estimating the powers of each other; but this is no reason for denying those powers. One man may be unable to produce a single couplet of measured verse, but he may see those around him writing with ease whole pages of it; and yet, the whole human race has produced but one *Shakespeare*. Why should the race have produced more than one *Moses?*

One of the most usual reasons for supposing a supernatural origin to the Bible is the fact that the sacred volume does really contain or express a wonderful amount of truth, the reality of which is found in life. As this truth is really in the Bible, the question arises, how did it get there? and the answer nearest at hand to explain this mystery is, that some superior Being must have had an agency in it—since we know we did not put it there ourselves. But, in fact, the proper inference to be drawn from the presence of truth in the Bible so wonderfully applicable to man

is, simply, that the Bible came from man, who, alone, of all the beings in the world, could by possibility have known the truths really in the Bible. The more exact and precise the conformity is, between that which is written and that which we observe in life, the more certain is it, that the Book was written by man; that is, by men, for the Bible is the work of many men.

We may suppose that by far the largest portion of the Bible was written by men well advanced in life, who had kept an observant eye upon their own experience and upon the external life of others. When such men reach a certain age, they are sure to come into the presence of a dark and mysterious shadow, the effect of which is to disclose the vanity of much of what has passed for real life, and to awaken, at the same time, an inner consciousness of another sort of life, which finally begins to take shape in the soul, and become a measure or rule by which to make a re-estimate of all prior judgments of things. It is not to be supposed that the experience of such men can be seen into by those who have never as yet known anything of it; while they, however, may not have lost their sense of the state or condition of others. In short, the more advanced naturally become the teachers and guides of those yet behind them, in the order of time, and these as naturally look up to the aged and receive their lessons of wisdom as from a higher world.

An elderly man's experience and observation, happily combined, does really place him in a position to reveal many things to "the younger sort," and in this

sense the Bible is a revelation of life. It stands over most men as an elder man over youth; but the real life of the Bible is the life of man, nevertheless, and there can be no other key to it than life. For this reason the Bible is a sealed book to most men, and must remain so; and it will continue to be regarded as the work of a supernatural being, simply because it originated in an experience beyond the ordinary experience of man. Still, I look upon this opinion as a species of idolatry, and as being calculated to separate us from the spirit of the book, by closing up the avenue for its entrance into the soul by a preternatural excitement of the sense of the marvelous.

Of the two directions in which most men look for guidance, the Bible or a living Church, it is really a matter of doubt which is the most likely to cramp the soul least, and leave it a possibility for escape into the free empyrean. If the Church could always be imbued with the Spirit of Truth and of wisdom, the decision would be in favor of the Church; but as the Church must be composed of men, subject to the weaknesses of man, it may fall lamentably away from grace, even to the point of crucifying the very spirit of grace and truth,—which I am certain is exactly what is taught by the life, persecution, and death of Christ. On the other hand, a written volume is necessarily a dead letter, in some respects, incapable of explaining itself, and liable, as we see the Bible is, to misinterpretation in a thousand ways,—of which the state or condition of the Christian world is a living evidence, the peace of

which proceeds, not from clear views and convictions, but from the fact that divisions and subdivisions have been carried so far that no one sect or denomination has any power to dictate to the rest. Perhaps if we could look behind both the Church and the Bible, we might see the working of a perfect Spirit, the true Logos, the ever-living Spirit of Truth, in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and who doeth all things well, "ordering all things in measure, and number, and weight." Certainly, a belief in GOD implies this, whether we are able to see it or not.

Let it be granted that religion is the most profound and the most imposing subject that can engage the faculties of man; let language be exhausted in setting forth its inexpressible mystery and immeasurable importance; still, as "there must be somewhere in nature such an order of being as man," so must man exhibit in his history expressions of his religious nature of the highest order possible to that nature; and such expressions, from the nature of the case, must transcend the powers of the generality of the race; while, nevertheless, there must be something in the religious nature of every man to which such expressions are addressed, and in which they must find their verification, so far as they are true. In this direction I find, as I have said, the mystical unity of the Alpha and Omega in the human race, in which all writings originate, and by which they must be judged.

No doubt there are difficulties in this subject, the

real root of which has been sufficiently indicated by the divine man Moses, where he forbids the worship of images, and prohibits the attempt to represent the invisible by carved work of any sort; by which we may be instructed to regard the writings of Moses themselves as presenting us but mere shadows of the ineffable one. It is a violation of his own injunction, to erect those writings into idols. They are instrumental, not final instructions, as we sufficiently see by the additions made to them in subsequent ages, including the gospels, though these are admitted to be the most wonderful productions of their kind in the world.

But, just in proportion to their wonderful character and importance, are we called upon to look carefully into them, though this should be done with clean hands, and with hearts open before GOD. We cannot understand these writings unless we examine them with freedom; neither can we profit by them wisely, except so far as we understand them, and receive them for what they are: and, above all, we should endeavor to receive them in their spirit; for CHRIST did not speak idly when he taught his disciples that the flesh profiteth nothing.

I shall show presently that Masons openly claim that the Bible contains the authentic records of Masonry. If this means anything at all, it means that the writings called Scriptures have been the work of members of secret societies in ancient times, designed mystically, by written instead of visible symbols, to teach *novitiates*, and edify *initiates*, by means of a species of com-

position that should convey an internal sense for the elect, but an external sense for the non-elect, who are called the "without."

Certain portions of the Scriptures do not, indeed, come under this description—the book of Job, for example, Ecclesiastes, many of the Psalms, &c.; but the moment we fall upon mysteries, the conferences of GOD with Moses, &c., we may at once decide for a mystical sense, and then endeavor to discover it. It is a melancholy misconception of the nature of GOD to imagine that such a course, pursued in the Spirit of Truth, can give offence to a GOD of Truth.

But I must run the risk of being tediously minute, rather than incur the danger of being misunderstood. I must say, therefore, that while the simple expression, the love of truth, may, for practical purposes, be regarded as the Spirit of Truth, what is meant by Truth in its highest sense is the most mysterious and arcane thing in the universe. In order to perceive this, let the student consider something else, by way of a remote analogy; for example, what is the *value* of money? It has a value, and yet it is not expressed by any single coin, for a single coin can only have a relative value as a portion of another coin; nor is it expressed by any commodity which it will purchase, for this only expresses its valuation for a particular time and for a particular commodity, while the value of the commodity is expressed in the same relative manner by the coin; but no positive value for either is thus expressed. What, then, is the value of money? In the same way the

question may be asked, What is weight? Two objects in nature manifest their weight by a certain attraction for each other, as the earth and a falling stone; but when they come together, the weight of each is merged in the other, and a state of *rest* is observed; but what becomes of the weight?

I have no wish to be overrefined, or to introduce merely fanciful speculations, but it seems proper, in treating of this subject, to point out some of its difficulties, in order that the student may prosecute his inquiries with a healthy and becoming modesty; for the Truth is not so much the reward of boldness as of unassuming diffidence. It is, in some sense, a state of rest between all extremes, and is thence well called the Sabbath of the soul. If it seems to be nothing, yet look again, and it shall appear to be all things, as was said by the dreamer, Jacob Behmen, and more recently by one of the most acute of modern speculative philosophers. If we cannot see it, we may see what is said of it in the second part of Faust, and may see the same mystery expressed in the Travels of Meister, in the repeated use of the word "empty," in the English translation of that mysterious Hermetic novel, which is a sort of gospel, according to Goethe.

SECTION XVII.

We read much, in the older writings of the world, of man, as a microcosm. He is called a little world; and every man, in the course of his life, is said to live over or repeat the world's history. The beginning of the world is the birth of man; and the end of the world is his death: but the end of the world, in this sense, is not the end of life, for life has no end. The idea of the microcosm is expressed by Moses, where we read:—Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. * * So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

The word image, as it is translated, served Moses, instead of the word microcosm; but the latter served the ancient philosophers for expressing the same thing.

Man is, first, the image of his race, the image of humanity; and next, in a higher sense, he is the image of God. Hence the expressions, I am a man, and whatsoever interests man interests me; and again, I am a child of God, and God's interests are mine.

From something like this as a starting-point, as it were, we may conclude that everything in the Bible has

a relation to the reader of it. The reader of the Bible may understand, I say, that in reading the sacred volume, he is reading about himself—about his own nature, which is the image of the race and the image of GOD; and this is equally true, within the meaning of the above definitions, whether the Bible be supposed to have had a human or a divine origin.

From this point of view the student, the lover of Truth, pervaded by the Spirit of Truth, may commence his interpretations of the sacred volume, using for this purpose both his head and his heart, his intellect and his affections [the moral sun and moon, perhaps the true "male and female, created he them"], between which, in the end, there ought to be no disharmony. He may feel perfectly certain that there is nothing in the holy book but what interests him; nothing foreign or strange to him, if he can but rightly understand it. Let him call upon the Spirit of Truth to "open his eyes and unstop his ears," and go forward with a perfect conviction that it cannot be to his advantage to live in a delusion of any sort. In the interpretation of the Bible there can be but one reason for preferring one sense or understanding of it to another; and that is its Truth. If any one becomes fully "persuaded in his own mind" that he has reached a clear and important truth, he may then take into consideration the question as to how far he is at liberty to suppress it, or whether he is not imperatively called upon to remove his light, his truth, from under the bushel.

In opening the Sacred volume, the first passages we meet, purport to give a history of Creation, in which God is represented as working six days; and, as if fatigued, he rests on the seventh. In this account a great man of the last century saw something so manifestly inapplicable to the Deity, that he placed this portion of Scripture, without hesitation, in the class of symbolic writings, upon a theory which he called the doctrine of correspondence. Upon this view, the great Swede, to whom the world is more indebted than it has yet discovered, regarded the opening verses of Genesis, not as a literal account of the creation of the natural world, but as a symbolic history of the regeneration of man; and he has furnished a minute interpretation of these verses from this point of view. This should at least rescue these passages from the scorn of the scoffer.

But as symbolism is a species of hieroglyphic representation, it may admit of more than one interpretation, and be equally true in more senses than one. Hence it has been suggested that the verses in question originated among a people who saw the world, as it were, created anew every year, by the passage of the sun from the vernal to the autumnal equinox; in the course of which, six months, called days, were regarded as months of labor; to be closed by a harvest month of rest from labor as a Sabbath; a day of thanks to the giver of all good for the blessings of the agricultural season. Upon this idea we see, in Genesis, the successive order of productions,—after the break-

ing up of the winter "chaos,"—commencing with "grass and the herb yielding seed;" then the "moving creature that hath life," needing vegetable sustenance; and at last "man," who lives upon all the other products of the earth.

A critical reader may find no small support to this interpretation by the almost admission of it to be found in the 21st verse of the 34th chapter of *Exodus:* Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: *in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest:* as if earing time and the harvest month at the close of the season, was the true Sabbath of thanks; called a day, in the institution of a weekly festival as a "shadow," or image of it. This interpretation is not without its beauty, and may equally with the other relieve us from the embarrassment which cannot but result from a literal reading of the first verses of Genesis, which science disowns, to the detriment of faith, wherever the literal sense is insisted upon.

At first view, the possibility of a variety in the significations of a symbol may seem to diminish its value: it may seem to lose something of directness and precision. But this will be seen, on farther examination, to be a strong recommendation for its use in teaching "things out of sight," where direct images must always be more or less deceptive. In history, the facts cannot be too precisely stated; but in illustrating the invisible, this sort of precision is impossible, that is, by sensuous imagery; and if attempted, it must carry the attention away from the subject matter. From a very

early period, on this account, the SUN has been taken as a symbol for the REASON or for the intellect, and the MOON for the AFFECTIONS: and they have been used also respectively for TRUTH and for FAITH; one giving light in the *day* of prosperity, the other in the *night* of adversity; and when this mode of teaching is recognized, a discovery of its beauty and truth go hand in hand together; for "truth is always beautiful." All sacred writings, when the design has been to teach unseen principles, must be regarded from some point of view similar to this, or they must remain incomprehensible, the external dress being the mere shell of an unseen kernel; a seed of which must be in the student. That the first verses of Genesis belong to this class of writings there can be no doubt.

After passing these opening verses, we come to the grand parable of man, commencing his career in the garden of Eden; and we read of his

> "first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful seat."—MILTON.

I regard it as a grievous loss to good taste, and to truth, to look upon this story as any thing but an allegory, a divine allegory. Its beauty as such exceeds that of any profane poem ever offered to the study of man.

What is this beautiful garden of Eden, but God's

own beautiful world, into which man is supposed to be born in a state of innocence, the innocence of childhood? There are two distinct accounts of the creation of man in Genesis; in one the language used is, —"Male and female created he them:"—and it is represented that the female was first tempted; but this does not mean that woman, as such, falls more easily than man; but the meaning is, that human nature is double in both man and woman, and this double nature is expressed in the reason (or intellect) and the affections. By calling the reason *male*, and the affections (or passional nature) female, it is said that the female first ate of the apple; because, both man and woman are exposed to fall first through their passional nature. Eve represents the affections in both man and woman, and these are first to wander and fasten upon improper objects; but soon afterwards the reason becomes depraved, and the whole nature, called man, is said to fall. But let us continue to use the word MAN. He tastes of the forbidden fruit; but he does not die physically, as would seem to be threatened. He dies morally. It is the death of the widow's son, an "only son."

Let the reader keep one eye upon life, and the other upon the story, and observe how one is the copy of the other. What is it to taste of the forbidden fruit, but to do violence to that internal monitor, whose office it is to say, Thou shalt not? Thou shalt not—what? thou shalt not *eat*, that is, thou shalt not *do* what I forbid; for in the day thou dost, I will send

thee forth from paradise, and I will stand at the gate thereof, armed with a flaming sword, to prevent thy return.

We may now see the internal monitor taking many forms expressive of the nature of man, and passing under many names in the sacred volume: for there is in truth but one subject in the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation included, and that is MAN; not GOD directly, but MAN; yet not MAN as an individual, but MAN as a nature which is phenomenally human, but essentially divine, and this is the reason why the Bible seems to have so much to say of GOD, and yet in truth is only treating of GOD'S "image." If the student keeps his inward eye steadily upon his own nature, in a broad sense, he may see that nature as it is expanded in the great world, and also as it is shadowed out in the Bible; the Bible being a unity, not because it was planned and executed under a single conception, but because the nature of man is one.

The grand subject of the Bible, as Milton has virtually told us, is the fall and the restoration of man. Let us make a brief abstract of this phase of the story.

It does not matter what the particular "disobedience" may be which sends man forth from paradise. It is therefore symbolized by his eating a forbidden fruit. The eating of the fruit is "disobedience;" and the consequence is the symbolic death of the slighted monitor. But now let us see how this monitor treats the man; for it does not die, but "sleepeth." By the

violation of the sense of duty, this sense becomes the Angel, as I have said, with the flaming sword at the gate of paradise; for what prevents the return of man to a state of innocence, but a sense of guilt? and this sense of guilt is the Angel with the flaming sword at the gate of paradise. The garden of innocence has been left by the act of disobedience, and a return to the garden becomes impossible by a moral necessity, by which, as it has been often said, a conscious sinner would be out of place and unhappy even in heaven.

Among heathen fables, this same principle is figured by the dragon which guards the entrance into the garden of the Hesperides; and we ought to recognize the common idea pervading many of these ancient fables; for in this way one representation illustrates another, and serves to establish the true meaning. Interpreters of the heathen fable tell those who would enter the garden of the Hesperides that, as a first step, they must find means to put the dragon to sleep; which, in the Christian system, is done by one only thing, and that is, repentance. But this is often preceded by a long and tedious circuit. Let us see.

The man having left the garden of Eden, must enter into the land of Egypt, the land of bondage, the land of darkness; and he has before him the wilderness to pass, under the guidance of the offended principle, which assumes the form of a lawgiver; the Moses of this divine poem of life. For when the divine law within dies, by an act of disobedience, it seizes upon the offender from without, in the form of a master.

The man now becomes a whole people, the Israelites; and under the lead of Moses, the image of the external law, the internal law having died, the people commence a return to the Land of Promise; which is only another name for the garden of innocence, which the man had left. He is carried to Mount Sinai, to hear the Law amidst thunders and lightning. This had become necessary, because the man had not listened to the same Law when it spake to him in the still small voice. This thunder and lightning, and fire and smoke, merely figure the moral and spiritual storms into which an erring man passes when his conscience becomes awakened to a sense of guilt, and the soul becomes conscious of GOD'S reality in his terrors. Thus, the angel with the flaming sword is Moses and Mount Sinai; and this mysterious Being is no less the LORD: but he is not recognized as such, because, for a time, the eyes of the man are "holden."

The man now passes through various adventures in the wilderness, the wilderness signifying the state of the man under the external Law. This is the "gloomy wood" in which Dante found himself in the "midway" of his "mortal life." The man is now supposed to be engaged in "the wars of the Lord," a book of which would seem to be lost. But we have a substitute for it in those exterminating wars which necessarily preceded the return of the wanderer to the Land of Promise. For these wars signify the conflict of the good principles in man with the evil principles; for the latter must be destroyed before the Land of Promise can be possessed.

But Moses does not enter the Land of Promise; which signifies that, under the Law, no man enters the Kingdom of Heaven. Hence the declaration of CHRIST to Nicodemus, except a man be born of Water *and* the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven: for, in this declaration, the water is the external Law. It is John the Baptist who baptizes in *water*, but who tells us there is one among us whom we know not, whose shoe's latchet he is not worthy to unloose. This Law is the flesh that profiteth nothing, that is, without the Spirit, without the life, the CHRIST of the Law. The simple meaning is, that, whoever lives a life of duty because it is commanded, does not act from the principle of duty in himself, but follows an external guide: the highest virtue is not achieved in such a man, and he does not therefore reap the highest reward of virtue. Therefore the man under the guidance of Moses reaches only a Pisgah view of the Land of Promise: This is signified, I say, by the death of Moses without entering it.

The Land of Promise is not under the law of bondage, but under the law of freedom, where the Angel with the flaming sword, after executing his mission as the external Law in the form of Moses, becomes the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL; and finally, the Salvation of Man, the CHRIST of the New Testament,—who has throughout this eventful history been an ever-present Spirit; the "word in the heart," the guiding "Angel," speaking in GOD'S "name," the "Prophet," like unto Moses; an ever-present Spirit, I say, in the world, the microcosm, reconciling the man to GOD, his loving

Father; who would not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is the indispensable condition of a return to innocence, the only heaven for the soul of man; and this is symbolized by childhood: Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall nót enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

When the principle of interpretation is rightly conceived, different portions of Sacred Writ will give out their meaning successively, for the whole cannot be seen at once. Thus, what is the pillar of fire which the Israelites followed in their escape from bondage, but the *star* which the *magi* followed, and which is, again, the Angel, and the Prophet, the Spirit of Truth, and the Comforter of other portions of Scripture; and who are the hosts of Pharaoh, drowned in the Red Sea, but portions of the natural man destroyed in his progress towards a divine life? It is useless to ask how much, if any, of this story is real, for the whole value of it lies in its spiritual significance. This is what distinguishes divine history, which must always be parabolic, from the ordinary doings of man, which form the basis of what is called profane history.

This idea of seeing the great in the small, and the small in the great; man in nature and nature in man; is no new thing in the world. Plato's Republic, as I have taken occasion to say elsewhere, is one man, the

Grand-man: and no loving student of Goethe need be told that Faust and Mephistopheles are the same person, in whom was also a purer nature than either:

"Man's triune nature shadowed forth one sees
In Gretchen, Faust, and Mephistopheles:
The INTELLECTUAL, to the gods that links him;
The SENSUAL, that 'midst dust and demons sinks him;
The MORAL, blending purity and love,
Guileless, unselfish, with forgiveness teeming,
Beautifying, sanctifying, all-redeeming,
Drawing his spirit to the realms above!"

It may seem strange, at first, to one who is not accustomed to regard principles underlying sensuous representations, to meet with a rule of interpretation which assumes in man, not as a phenomenal individual, but as a nature, an ADAM, a MOSES, and a CHRIST; but it is certain that these mysterious beings have their origin and their significance in the nature of man. Except from some such view as this, the Bible does not seem to speak to us; but from this principle we may find in the Sacred volume inexhaustible treasures. It is a study of life and for life. It is a sacred volume, speaking of and to the nature of man, and is the greatest outward treasure in the world, to a soul rightly using it (Matt. xi. 11). Its principles are within us, and as we see them truly, we are assisted to the knowledge of ourselves, which has always been considered an attainment of the highest worth.

As a merely written volume, however, some of the wisest men of the world, in times past, have pronounced

the Bible a dangerous book. St. Paul is not the only authority for this; but Christ, the personified Spirit of Truth, made the same declaration in the words, the flesh [the letter] profiteth nothing; but the words which the Spirit speaks in the soul, they are truth and they are life. But even this declaration, seen only in the written Word, has its danger, and has, without doubt, been the occasion of no little fanaticism; because men do not sufficiently "try the spirits" to discover the true from the false, and are deluded by merely metaphorical expressions.

SECTION XVIII.

A DISTINCTION has been set forth in recent times between theology and religion, which is both true and important. The former term is easily defined; but I know of no adequate definition of religion. Theology is busy about the history of religious manifestations, and includes also all philosophical speculations about religion itself, while the latter expression seems to elude all attempts to define it; possibly because it is an original principle, and must be apprehended for itself, or it is not apprehended at all. It may be named, but cannot be defined; just as God is a name, but the name of one of whom, strictly speaking, we have no definition, or, at least, no descriptive definition; for such a definition would limit the illimitable. He is the I AM. A speculative philosopher may, nevertheless, define, and clearly define, what the word GOD shall stand for in his investigations, but he does not thereby define GOD. He only postulates an idea from which to work out a system; and as perhaps no two men have the same idea of GOD, all such systems fail to satisfy those who do not accept the philosopher's postulated idea. Some have attempted to indicate a

conception of God by the expression of two co-ordinate and mutually essential ideas, leaving a third to be conceived but unexpressed, GOD being regarded as a mediating principle between all extremes. Hence GOD, as a Spirit, is the Mediator between GOD as the Creator and man the creature, the two latter expressions, Creator and creature, mutually supposing each other. It is GOD the Mediator, who raises up the humble and humiliates the proud; or, as expressed figuratively in Scripture, he exalts the valleys and throws down the mountains. He is both life and death: He forms light and creates darkness: makes peace and creates evil. We read, even in Hindoo philosophy, that we may name everything in existence, and that GOD is not any of them; and then, again, that he is all of them. When Socrates was led (or misled?) to speak of the Deity as if he had a knowledge of him who "wills and wills not to be known," he invariably proposed a purification, as if he had sinned. Hence, it has been said that those who know the most on this subject are disposed to say the least, as if "to speak is to err,"—as expressed in a German *Xenia*. Here we must see, also, one of the reasons why those who have written on this subject have generally resorted to fables and parables, or to "dark sayings" (Prov. i. 6), for kindred souls to interpret. These are among the considerations which may assure us that the Mediator has never had a personal historical existence in time (being eternal), while yet it is possible to shadow out the life of all things in parables

and mythical histories,—examples of which we have in the gospels.

Piety seems to be the emotional side of religion, and it is chiefly through emotions that religion is contemplated. True and genuine piety, in this sense, may be seen in very early life, and at all periods of life; often in those who have never heard of a discussion on the historical questions connected with the Bible, and also where no doubts have ever been raised about miracles. It may lead a struggling life even with these doubts, and survive them, no matter how determined: thus giving a most practical proof that piety, or religious emotion, does not depend upon the solution of intellectual problems, and will survive every determination which the speculative reason may arrive at on religious questions.

With minds so constituted, however, especially when unexercised in dialectics, it is usual to mistake the ground of such emotions, and to attribute them to historical beliefs; and then it is, that the slightest show of danger to these seems to threaten piety itself. But we might just as reasonably be alarmed for our feelings of friendship for those we love, on being told that the story of the two Pythagorean friends is probably a fable: or, we might as rationally imagine that the sublimity of a rising sun, or the splendor of his setting, is in danger, from the astronomic theory or science certifying that he does not move. There is nothing more common than to mistake the occasion of a feeling for

its cause; as, to mention a single instance which may include all, when we imagine the Bible to be the cause of religion instead of a product of it.

There is no emotion possible to the human heart that can compare in beauty with a pure religious affection. Such affections are of heaven, and we read that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater (more blessed) than John with his water baptism, that is, his letter. But it is a mistake to imagine that any such affection depends upon a belief in the miracles attributed to Jesus. On the contrary, in proportion as the soul dwells upon *particulars*, with regard to Jesus, restricted to a certain period of time, it must be in danger of losing that sense of CHRIST which makes his presence possible to a believing heart. CHRIST is an ever-present Spirit, very particularly talked about and written about some eighteen centuries since; but no more then in the world than now.

There are a great many questions connected with this subject, belonging to the theology side of it, the product of modern creeds and theories about religion, which, as they do not arise from a plain and candid reading of the gospels, so neither can they be settled by the gospels; except, as the gentlemen of the law say, by throwing them out of court.

The word trinity, it has been said, is not in the Bible, and the question has been pertinently asked, how can we suppose a doctrine to be vitally important, as a matter of faith, when the very language necessary for its statement is not in the sacred volume? Not but

that the doctrine may be true, but that its technical importance has been, in modern controversial writings, greatly overstated. In like manner the doctrine of the unity of GOD is unnecessarily urged with heat against that of the trinity, when those who hold the latter doctrine affirm the unity also; for this shows that the contending parties are at variance on some collateral questions which should be settled in the first place, and then perhaps they might agree. One may think of God as "a spirit" (John iv. 24); while another may connect with his idea of GOD some notion of a *thing*, and then is unable to imagine how one *thing* can be three, or vice versa. How can it be said that a doctrine has been clearly revealed in Scripture, which we see yet the subject of violent controversy in the Church? And, of the disputants, which party is entitled to accuse the other of blindness, when both alike appeal to the Scriptures?

When we see the church so divided, and often engaged in angry controversy within itself, one is tempted to ask—what has really been revealed? Before any one can give even to himself an intelligent answer to this question, he must understand what is meant by revelation. But most of the questions raised in the church belong to what are called side issues, and their determination may be impossible in the nature of things. Many questions seem to have arisen, having little else to depend upon than some misapprehension of a word, metaphorically used. What is the *blood* of CHRIST but the Spirit of CHRIST; and what is this but the SPIRIT

of TRUTH? The historical shedding of CHRIST'S blood is a mythical representation of that suffering which the spirit of every man passes through in its "combats" with what is called the world and its temptations. Thus CHRIST is said to have been made perfect through suffering (Heb. ii. 10); and it is certainly a mistake to imagine that his suffering can supply the place of such trials as the common lot of humanity imposes upon all of us; by which the "gold" is said to be "tried," as "in a fire" (Rev. iii. 18). His life is a model for us; but he did not suffer for us in a literal sense. If we claim that he suffered for us, it can only be as an exemplar, and this only on the supposition that he was a man, and not a supernatural being. In this view, he may be said to teach us, by his life and death, the power of Truth to carry the soul, by the virtue of humility, through the heaviest trials that can be inflicted upon the outward man. This was a model idea with those who wrote the gospels. Hence we see the personified humanity uttering that climax of all prayer: O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt (Matt. xxvi. 39). If we could but learn the true sense of this prayer; if we could but appropriate this one prayer by a true insight into the nature of it, we should see that there is no affliction possible to the human side of man which his divine side is not capable of rising above; not, indeed, by his own power, but by the power of GOD, becoming available through humility. But this lesson can hardly be taught to those who suppose that CHRIST

suffered, in a literal sense, in their stead, and who fancy themselves free to rejoice because another has been afflicted.

I know very well that this dogma does not always work precisely in this manner; but this is the logical tendency of it, and it is only evaded by the fact that the logic of feeling is too strong for that of the head in most cases, so that the true nature of the question is swallowed up in an immense feeling of gratitude, the beauty of which stands for a solution of all difficulties. It does not seem to require much observation of life to see that the ordinary theory of an external propitiation for sin can never really touch life itself: the most it can do is to quiet a bosom disturbed by a no less external sense of sin. An imaginary crime committed six thousand years ago may very well be removed by a no less imaginary suffering experienced two thousand years ago. But Life itself remains what it ever has been, and sees in these histories but shadowy images, by which something essentially invisible has sought to express itself in visible forms, that is, in mythical representations.

Much anxiety might be saved to many if they could only understand the various senses in which words are used in the Scriptures, for the same word is not always used in the same sense. Unless we can understand the meaning of the words in reference to the passages in which they occur, how can we expect to comprehend the passages themselves? Thus the word faith may sometimes be used for belief, and then, again, for quite another thing. Faith is not a mere historical belief.

This sort of belief is of the "flesh," as explained heretofore, and is without "life." A true faith in a Bible relation carries its own evidence with it, and is the "blood," or the Truth of it. This is the reason why CHRIST says that we must not only eat of his flesh, but drink of his blood, or we have no life in us. St. Paul's *faith* means St. Paul's *truth*. It is his doctrine, or what, in some places, he calls *his* gospel, and it is his mystery.

With many, faith takes the name of trust, or this for that; but trust supposes some prior conviction. Thus, we may be convinced of the goodness of GOD, and then *trust* in it. In this sense many have what they call faith in the Scriptures. They feel assured of their divine character or origin, from external testimony or authority, and then *trust* in them. This is not the *faith*, I am bold enough to say, which St. Paul preached; for the "faith he preached" (Romans x. 8), was not a simple belief in the Scriptures, to which, in their Letter, it is hardly too strong an expression to say, he was hostile. He preached the faith, that is, the Spirit, or, in one word, the CHRIST of the Scriptures, and had "no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). We should learn the sense in which words are used before we undertake to build up a doctrine upon them.

Of works, also, one class must be referred to the law; simply a compliance with the ceremonies, &c., prescribed by the law. Such works as these were, again, of the flesh, performed under a mere belief founded upon authority; but when performed under the in-

fluence of faith, as above explained, they had the character of the faith, which was their SPIRIT. But faith, in the highest sense, is the same as the Spirit of Truth; and this was the saving faith of those who preceded the advent of CHRIST; and it saved those who had it, because it was CHRIST, when known under the name of the Holy One of Israel, or some other name. To possess the Spirit of Truth, and to confide in it, is to have faith in this sense, whatever name it may bear; and then it is that faith and works unite, and works are not then works of the law, but of the gospel. This is the faith which is counted as righteousness.

The importance of faith in the Scriptures is the importance of truth itself; and the importance of belief in the Scriptures arises from this, that such belief is often instrumental in the production of faith; but until this faith is attained, mere belief is a bondage, or has no more merit than a belief in the history of Rome or any other history; yet, and here is an apparent contradiction, when faith is obtained, belief is no longer of value, and like "Christ in the flesh," may be left "behind," or, like Hagar, may be sent into the wilderness.

We may well keep in mind, that St. Paul calls his gospel a mystery, and that St. Peter saw in his epistles some things hard to be understood. This may in no small degree be due to the different senses in which the same word has been used in different passages. Thus, in Philippians iii. 3, it is certain, as I have urged, that by the *flesh* St. Paul referred to the flesh of CHRIST, as seen in the Law and the ceremonies of the Jewish re-

ligion; the "mystery" being CHRIST, the Spirit of the Law, or of the Jewish religion. But in other passages the word *flesh* is used to signify the works of the devil, through the carnal affections of man. It is the same mystery to see the Church as the Body of CHRIST, or to see CHRIST in the Church as its true Spirit, which lives, as I say, in every faithful pastor throughout Christendom, in whom the Spirit of Truth resides; not because of a historical past, but, on the contrary, in this spirit the true nature of the past may be seen as in a mirror. It is the duty of a clerk to read the Scriptures to us, as I have said, and a boy of even ten years of age may do this; but it is the office of a teacher to tell us what they mean: and this is the office of CHRIST, the Spirit of Truth, who gives us the water turned into wine. Every true Christian pastor is, or ought to be, an incarnation of the Holy one of Israel; but, in so far as he falls short of this, he is an incompetent guide, and teaches at the peril of his own soul.

Before closing this Section, and proceeding to recite some illustrative passages from Masonic writings, the author desires to repeat, that a book so complicated as the Bible, the product of so many ages, and representing so many phases of life, cannot be explained upon any one principle of interpretation, except the broad one, that nature and the spirit must interpret their own productions. The author is of opinion, nevertheless, that the theory, if it be one, or hypothesis, if this be the more appropriate word, of the origin of the gospels

within a secret society, removes more difficulties, and interprets a larger portion of those mysterious books, than any other which a rational man can accept. Those, however, who attribute the books to a miraculous origin can have but little, if any, toleration for this hypothesis; but there are many minds in this age upon whom the notion of a supernatural origin makes no impression, or a bad one. Man is the only being in creation that writes books; and even if it be supposed that he may write under supernatural influences, still, those influences, in acting through man, must, in some sense, operate in accordance with the nature of the instrument, which, therefore, must still be the key for opening or explaining the product.

I know of no middle ground on this subject. The sacred books—for they are sacred, as treating of the most important subject of life—the sacred books are either natural, and a subject for natural study and interpretation, or they are supernatural, and are then above and beyond us, and we cannot hope to understand them.

We may claim, if we choose, and upon very rational grounds, that man, in respect to books, occupies an independent position; and, when any book is urged upon him as of this or that character, he is not bound to show the contrary; but the burden of proof must naturally fall upon those who bring forward the book: they must prove its character. To do this, however, it is plainly reasoning in a circle to advance the contents of a book, —except in questions of science, where the principles

are self-evident,—as evidence of the authority of a book, and then appeal to that authority in support of the facts alleged to establish the authority of the book itself. In other words, it is vicious reasoning to adduce the miracles in the gospels as evidence of CHRIST'S supernatural character before the record itself is proved to be genuine. But the proof of this, to be legitimate, should come from some independent source, or it cannot be appealed to in support of the miracles. It is a plain case: the Bible cannot be appealed to as an authority for the miracles, and the miracles be appealed to, at the same time, as the evidence or the support of the Bible. As a mere question of natural right and equity, I say, we are authorized to take this ground; but I would be disposed to urge this no further than to hold a supernaturalist in suspense, while examining the book to ascertain what its contents are. I would not allow any one to begin by asserting a specially divine origin to the book; but I would take the natural ground that all books, until shown to have other causes, are the product of the natural man.

Then, with respect to books, we know that some—those on science, for example—carry their own authority with them; but all other books, without exception, claiming extraordinary consideration, must not take it ill that their pretensions are examined, as I say, from the natural stand-point, until they make good their claims.

The Bible, however, contains many truths of sci-

ence. I do not speak of mathematical science, but of moral and spiritual science, for to some extent these subjects admit of the most absolute evidence, that of experience itself; and to this extent they have all the certainty that can be claimed for sciences commonly so called. To this extent the Bible proves itself, or proves its own statements or representations of Truth; but in this portion of the Bible, I find no place for miracles. The authority of the truths really in the Bible is that of the scientific proof of these truths: but here the Bible is in the dependent position, and receives its authority from the science which discovers the verities it contains; and this authority cannot be extended beyond what the science affirms, and cannot, therefore, be alleged in favor of miracles. These are not proved by science, and still less by experience: on the contrary, they contradict the grounds of all science, and until they are proved by some other authority, they cannot be alleged themselves in proof of anything.

These remarks are made in view of the assumed claim of a supernatural origin for the Bible, in advance of proof that the volume is entitled to that character; but they do not deny the respect due to the book from prudential considerations: here is altogether another question. A book that has commanded the veneration of the world for so many ages, may claim, upon this ground alone, the fullest, but at the same time should receive the freest examination; and it cannot be the part of prudence to put the book aside as unimportant

without examination. But I call this a prudential, and not a moral consideration, except so far as morality itself affirms the duty of prudence.

The religious claim for the Bible may therefore be held in abeyance, and it is right that it should be so. The religious feeling is of the most delicate, and, at the same time, of the most absolute nature; and when roused in any human soul, it calls for the highest authority before submitting itself to dictation from without. The opposition of this feeling to dictation is the highest proof of its vitality. It is a life-principle, and for this reason it refuses to acknowledge any rightful power over it in a finite form, and demands the highest proof before acknowledging the authority of any external power whatever—the power of GOD, expressed in nature, not being included, because that itself is affirmed from within, and is religiously submitted to for that reason.

In short, GOD alone has the right to exercise authority over the religious soul; and this, because his own nature is expressed in such a soul. Therefore it is that religious spirits have refused in all ages to acknowledge the dominion of anything external, which has not worn at least the appearance of having had GOD'S sanction. A book may seem to have this sanction, so far as it has itself proceeded from the religious souls of other ages; but to a religious spirit, no book can rise above this authority, the seal of which, in the last analysis, lies in itself. In one word, the Spirit is free; but finds its

freedom only in recognizing itself in GOD, and then can submit to nothing less.

In the course of my remarks and inquiries hitherto, I have had no disposition to make use of this species of argument, and I only touch upon it here to show how easy it is, for one who throws himself upon his natural independence, to call for proof; and how difficult it is for the supernaturalist to furnish that which, on other subjects or other themes, would be considered unobjectionable.

I do not wish to look at the Bible from a controversial position. The book has an inexpressible value, but not as a supernatural work; and I have no wish to fritter away its intelligible portions by arguments and discussions about its authority, which are so apt to degenerate into "vain jangling" about "the traditions of men." So far as it speaks intelligible truth, I want no other authority for it; but the miracles only speak intelligibly when seen from the mythical point of view. Here they have an important and a beautiful sense; but as mere MIRACULA, they are worse than nothing to me; and why? Because they would destroy my conceptions of the divine nature, and I could then find nothing anywhere to rest in.

Nothing in the universe can be proved but by the assumption of something unchangeable, not requiring proof: but this is GOD, conceived in his immutability. It is because GOD does not change, that anything whatever remains true from one instant to another. But

this conception excludes miracles; because these, by supposition, would make that false whose truth is included in the verity of GOD'S immutability.

The student should contemplate the necessities of his own reason or rational nature; and, he will then see, that a miracle is as impossible as a *chance* event—a chance event being simply an event whose cause is unknown; for there is no place in nature for a contingent event, except in relation to our ignorance. From this consideration we must see, that a so-called miracle is like a chance event, an unexplained wonder. This view does not deny wonders; it only denies that wonders are miracles, in the usual sense of this word. Life is full of wonders: but there are no contingencies or accidents in life: Life is full of wonders again; but there are no miracles in life.

Some, possibly many of the events recorded in the Scriptures, commonly regarded as miraculous, may have been perfectly natural in their day, and I would wish to make a large allowance for that class of recorded wonders. I have no desire to make my own limited observation of external life the measure of all that transpires or has transpired in it. But there are some things recorded in the Bible which, in no sense, appear to be natural,—except as they are assumed to be symbolical relations, somewhat in the nature of parables, and designed for the same species of teaching. Such relations not only lie without and beyond my observation of life, but they conflict with reason itself; and I may claim, therefore, that before they can be

alleged in proof of anything, they should be proved themselves.

An avowed parable may contain relations confessedly impossible; and such parables are abundant in the gospels. Now, I claim that the entire gospels are unavowed parables, because they contain the same species of the impossible; and a reasonable place in history has been assigned for their use. History almost speaks audibly, and says, they were the secret books of the Essenes.

But, after all, the view any one may take of this question, does not depend so much upon any mere argument, but may always be seen in the postulates which lay back in the individual consciousness of the student. To one whose conceptions of GOD are not contradicted by the notion of a miracle, a miracle will seem not only possible, but will be regarded as a simple exercise of GOD'S power; but in such a case, the power of GOD is imagined to be like that of a king, and is not conceived, as the phrase is, in its essence, as power. To deny GOD'S power to work a miracle, seems to such minds, direct impiety; it is, in their eyes, a denial of GOD'S supreme power: but they are mistaken. GOD'S power is as much affirmed by denying miracles, as it could be by asserting them, as may be seen by this simple consideration. Whatever is impossible in nature, is so because of something which makes it impossible: but that something is a part of nature; it is included in GOD'S works, and expresses his power, like all other things. In other words, GOD is the cause

of both, the possible, and of the reason why anything is impossible. But again, I say, that if nothing is impossible, then GOD'S beautiful nature is a chaos; at least, to my conceptions. When we say that nothing is impossible to GOD,—consistently with the harmony of his nature, must be considered as implied, though unexpressed; for, on no account must this harmony be denied, as such a denial would be one of the worst forms of atheism; yet this precise form of atheism lies, unconsciously, as I conceive, in the mind which imagines a miracle possible. Still, I do not offer these remarks as convincing to others, but only as an expression of my own convictions, and I confess they all lie in the idea of GOD. It is no disparagement of the power of GOD, to say that it is limited by himself; and this is all that is said when the possibility of a miracle is denied. If others think differently, it is because they have a different idea of GOD, or of GOD'S power, than I have. But I have no quarrel with other men's opinions upon this subject. I value my own freedom of thought too highly to feel disposed to deny it to others. In entering upon the consideration of this subject, it would be well if we could all cultivate the frame of mind expressed in the words: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD.

SECTION XIX.

Although the members of the Masonic fraternity must be supposed well instructed in the history of their society, yet I have concluded to add here a few extracts, principally from the masonic writings of Dr. Oliver and Dr. Mackey, which can hardly fail to interest the general reader. They will be found exceedingly interesting as matters of history, whatever they may be thought to prove.

My object in adducing these citations—from masonic writings, let it be remembered—is to show that Masons have some ceremonies assimilated to those practised in ancient Esoteric societies, in Egypt, Phœnicia, Greece, and other countries, including Palestine, and that the modern and the ancient ceremonies have and had one and the same design. It will be seen that one of those ceremonies had, and still has for its purpose, to teach the immortality of the soul, by an exhibition, of some sort, in commemoration of "the death and resurrection of some distinguished individual, honored as a hero, or revered as a god."

By showing this fact, from masonic testimony, and that the Masons claim a direct doctrinal descent from

the Essenes, the Esoteric society among the Jews, the grounds for the supposition advanced in the preceding work will be greatly strengthened, that the gospels were the secret books of the Essenes; and the scene on Mount Calvary, instead of being regarded as an actual tragedy, especially a tragedy in which the SON OF GOD suffered, will be contemplated as a divine drama, devised, among other purposes, for that of teaching, by a dramatic scene, the immortality of the soul.

I wish to show, by these extracts, the extreme probability of the supposition, I say, that the gospels, in the scene of the crucifixion, only express in writing, in the form of a divine drama, what was a mimetic ceremony among the Essenes,—exhibited most likely upon the initiation of a candidate into the mysteries of the order.

I acknowledge the profound and awful mysteries involved in life, death, and the resurrection, and while I have no disposition to draw upon myself the accusation of "rushing in where angels fear to tread," I have just as little disposition to shut up my soul and refuse to examine this or any other question, because a poet found a place to utter a pretty or an impressive saying. In my opinion it is best, and most becoming a rational creature, to look all questions directly, but innocently, in the face, as furnishing the only hope of coming to an understanding of them; for, in this way, if we meet with what we cannot comprehend, we may discover some reason why it is beyond and above us, and this may then content us; but to sit down in complacent

ignorance, can hardly be the part of one who claims, as his endowment, the gift of reason. The motives and purposes, however, of every student must rest with his own soul; and here, certainly, no one can be too careful, or can think with too much gravity on the momentous questions involved in this inquiry.

For the purpose of facilitating the observation of the most striking passages in proof of the point I suggest, I will insert them in italics, though the interest of the entire extracts will repay a careful reading.

With these remarks I will now proceed with the extracts.

ESSENES. A sect among the Jews, supposed by masonic writers to have been the descendants of the Free Masons of the Temple, and through whom the order was propagated to modern times. The real origin of the Essenes has been a subject of much dispute among profane writers; but *there is certainly a remarkable coincidence in many of their doctrines and ceremonies with those professed by the Free Masons.* They were divided into two classes, *speculatives* and *operatives;* the former devoting themselves to a life of contemplation, and the latter daily engaging in the practice of some handicraft. The proceeds of their labor were, however, deposited in one general stock; for they religiously observed a community of goods. They secluded themselves from the rest of the world, and were *completely esoteric in their doctrines, which were also of a symbolic character.* They admitted no women into their order; abolished all distinctions of rank, "meeting on the level," and giving the precedence only to virtue. Charity was bestowed on their indigent brethren, and, as a means of recognition, they

adopted signs and other modes similar to those of the Free Masons. *Their order was divided into three degrees.** When a candidate applied for admission, his character was scrutinized with the greatest severity. He was then presented with a girdle, a hatchet, and a white garment. Being thus admitted to the first degree, he remained in a state of probation for one year; during which time, although he lived according to their customs, he was not admitted to their meetings. At the termination of this period, if found worthy, he was advanced to the second degree, and was made a partaker of the waters of purification. But he was not yet permitted to live among them, but after enduring another probation of two years' duration, he was at length admitted to the third degree, and united in full fellowship among them. On this occasion, he took a solemn oath, the principal heads of which, according to Josephus, were as follows: To exercise piety toward God, and justice toward men; to hate the wicked and assist the good; to show fidelity to all men, obedience to those in authority, and kindness to those below him; to be a lover of truth, and a reprover of falsehood; to keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains; *to conceal nothing from his own sect, nor to discover any of their doctrines to others; to communicate their doctrines, in no otherwise than he had received them, himself; and, lastly, to preserve the books belonging to the sect*, and the names of the *angels* [?] in which he shall be instructed. Philo, of Alexandria, who, in two books written expressly on the subject of the Essenes, has given a copious account of their doctrines and manners, says: That when they were listening to the secret instructions of their chiefs, they

* The three first degrees of Masonry are, The Entered Apprentice, The Fellow Craft, and The Master Mason.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

stood with "the right hand on the breast a little below the chin, and the left hand placed along the side." A similar position is attributed by Macrobius to Venus, when deploring the death of Adonis, in those rites which were celebrated at Tyre, *the birth-place of Hiram the Builder.—Lexicon of Free Masonry by Dr. Mackey.*

The following passage is from Dr. Oliver's Theocratic Philosophy of Free Masonry, page 325, with his own note on the Essenes: "The Three Degrees of Masonry, as they were probably arranged by the Grand Masters at the building of the Temple, might bear a general reference to the three Orders of the Jewish priesthood, an arrangement which has also been introduced into the Christian Church. Indeed this number was universally adopted in every ancient system. Even the Spurious Free Masonry had the same number of Steps. The first consisted of probation, purification, and expiation. The second was called the Lesser Mysteries; into which the candidate *passed* by solemn ceremonies; and also to the third, after a long period of additional trial, which was denominated *the Greater Mysteries. These consisted of fearful rites, introductory to a full revelation of all the ineffable doctrines, which he was bound under an obligation and heavy penalties never to reveal.*"*

* *The Essenes, who preserved the true Free Masonry from extinction in the dark ages which preceded the advent of Christ,* admitted only three degrees, and the probationary term extended to one whole year. If, during this period, the candidate gave satisfactory proofs of his temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice, he was accepted, and received the first Step or Degree; in which novitiate he remained another year before he was passed to the Second Step; and it was not until the expiration of three years that he was admitted to a full par-

DR. OLIVER, speaking of the Spurious Free Masonry, the name he gives to all of the ancient Mysteries (Eleusinian and others), says: "Meanwhile the true light of Masonry declined in public estimation as the rapid progress of its earth-born adversary made all nations and people and languages bend before it, until it gave portentous intimation of approaching decay; and nought could have saved it from extinction, had it not been reinvigorated by the Essenes, a well-intentioned sect of people amongst the Jews, who took charge of the forsaken institution, cherished it in their bosom, until its rays of light once more began to illuminate the surrounding darkness; and it thence continued to enlighten a narrow and restricted path, terminating, however, in the broad and glorious blaze of splendor that dissipated the unholy shades of idolatry, in the person of JESUS CHRIST."

"ANTIQUITY OF MASONRY. Free Masonry is in its principles undoubtedly coeval with the creation, but in its organization as a peculiar institution, such as it now exists, we dare not trace it further back than to the building of King Solomon's temple. It was, however, in its origin closely connected with the Ancient Mysteries, and the curious inquirer will find some gratification in tracing this connection.

ticipation in the secrets and benefits of the society. And even here the utmost precaution was used. *The candidate was previously bound by the most solemn vows to keep inviolably secret the mysteries of his Order*, and to act upon and abide by the ancient usages and established customs of the Fraternity. The Brethren distinguished each other in darkness and in light by signs and tokens. *The most profound silence was imposed at their assemblies; the Lecturer expounding the tenets of their creed, which were unfolded in a series of allegorical symbols, the rest listening with a grave and solemn attention.—Note, by Dr. Oliver.*

"When man was first created, he had, of course, a perfect knowledge of the true name and nature of the being who created him. But when, by his own folly, he fell 'from his high estate,' he lost, with his purity, that knowledge of God which, in his primeval condition, formed the noblest endowment of his mind. * * * * * * * * *

"The philosophers and sages, however, still retained, or discovered by the dim light of nature, *some traces of these great doctrines of masonry, the unity of God, and the immortality of the soul. But these doctrines they dared not teach in public; for history records what would have been the fate of such temerity, when it informs us that Socrates paid the forfeit of his life for his boldness in proclaiming these truths to the Athenian youth.*

"*They, therefore, taught in secret what they were afraid to inculcate in public, and established for this purpose the Ancient Mysteries, those truly masonic institutions, which, by a series of solemn and imposing ceremonies, prepared the mind of the initiate for the reception of those unpopular dogmas, while, by the caution exercised in the selection of candidates, and the obligations of secresy imposed upon them, the teachers were secured from all danger of popular bigotry and fanaticism.* A full description of these Mysteries will be found in this work under the appropriate title. Their members went through a secret ceremony of initiation, by which they became entitled to a full participation in the esoteric knowledge of the order, and were in possession of certain modes of recognition known only to themselves. *In all of them, there was, in addition to the instructions in relation to the existence of a Supreme Deity, a Legend in which, by the dramatic representation of the violent death and subsequent restoration to life of some distinguished personage, the doctrines of the resur-*

*rection and the soul's immortality, were emblematically illustrated.**

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"The fraternity of Dionysian Architects were linked together by the secret ties of the Dionysian Mysteries, into which they had all been initiated. Thus constituted, *the fraternity was distinguished by many peculiarities that strikingly assimilate it to our order.* In the exercise of charity, the 'more opulent were sacredly bound to provide for the exigencies of the poorer brethren.' For the facilities of labor and government, they were divided into lodges, each of which was governed by a Master and Wardens. They employed in their ceremonial observances many of the implements which are still to be found among Free Masons, and used like them, a universal language, by which one brother could distinguish another in the dark as well as in the light, and which served to unite the members scattered over India, Persia, and Syria, into one common brotherhood. The existence of this order in Tyre, at the time of the building of the Temple, is universally admitted; and *Hiram, the widow's son,* to whom Solomon intrusted the superintendence of the workmen, as an inhabitant of Tyre, and as a skilful architect and cunning and curious workman, was doubtless one of its members. Hence we are scarcely claiming too much for our order, when we suppose that the Dionysians were sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to assist King Solomon in the construction of the house he was about to dedicate to Jehovah, and that they communicated to their Jewish fellow-laborers a knowledge of the advantages of their fraternity, and invited them to a participa-

* The reader will observe in these extracts the many allusions to this ceremony, and make his own inferences.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

tion in its mysteries and privileges. In this union, however, *the apocryphal Legend of the Dionysians gave way to the true Legend of the Masons, which was unhappily furnished by a melancholy incident that occurred at the time.**

"Upon the completion of the Temple, the workmen who had been engaged in its construction necessarily dispersed, to extend their knowledge, and to renew their labors in other lands. But we do not lose sight of the order. *We find it still existing in Judea, under the name of the* ESSENIAN FRATERNITY. *This was rather a society of philosophers than of architects, and in this respect it approached still nearer to the character of modern speculative masonry.* The Essenians were, however, undoubtedly connected with the Temple, as their origin is derived by the learned Scaliger, with every appearance of truth, from the KASSIDEANS, a fraternity of Jewish devotees, who, in the language of Lawrie, had associated together as 'Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem, to adorn the porches of that magnificent structure, and to preserve it from injury and decay.' The Essenians were peculiarly strict in scrutinizing the characters of all those who applied for admission into their fraternity. The successful candidate, at the termination of his probationary novitiate, was presented by the Elders of the society with a white garment, as an emblem of the purity of life to which he was to aspire, and which, like the unsullied apron, the first gift that we bestow upon an

* This "melancholy incident" was the (legendary) death of Hiram Abif, who is supposed to have been murdered in defence of his fidelity—refusing to disclose his secret, the secret of the society. The true secret of this secret is, that Truth is the gift of GOD; and the natural or bodily life must be yielded rather than the Truth. CHRIST is the personification of it, and hence the passage in Luke xiv. 26.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

Entered Apprentice, was esteemed more honorable than aught that any earthly prince could give. An oath was administered to him, by which he bound himself not to divulge the secrets with which he should be intrusted, and not to make any innovations upon the settled usages of the society. He was then made acquainted with certain modes of recognition, and was instructed in the traditionary knowledge of the order. They admitted no woman into their fraternity; abolished all distinctions of rank; and devoted themselves to the acquisition of knowledge and the dispensation of charity.

"*From the Essenians, Pythagoras derived much, if not all of the knowledge and the ceremonies with which he clothed the esoteric school of his philosophy;* and while this identity of doctrines and ceremonies is universally admitted by profane historians, many of the most competent of our own writers have attributed the propagation of masonry into Europe to the efforts of the Grecian sage. * * * * *

"Free Masons continued for a long time to receive the protection and enjoy the patronage of the Church and the nobility,* until the former, becoming alarmed at the increase of their numbers and the extension of their privileges, began to

* Let us suppose that the Church was originally the Essene society, in which the inner life of the Jewish church was taught and practised. But this passed into an external church, as pointed out in Sec. xiii. of this work. So long as this external church maintained itself in conformity with the true Church, or nearly so, its leaders, themselves of the Essene order, "patronized" the secret order, being in fact members of both the inner and the outer church. In process of time, the outer church lost the *Secret;* and then persecuted its real possessors, because the *outside* church can endure nothing which has even the appearance of holding a rival position.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

persecute them with an unrelenting rigor, which eventually led to their suspension on the continent."—*Lexicon.*

"ADONIS, MYSTERIES OF. The mysteries which, in Egypt, the cradle of all the Pagan rites, had been consecrated to Osiris, in passing over into Phenicia were dedicated to Adonis. According to the legend, Venus, having beheld Adonis when a child, became so enamored of him, that she seized him, and concealing him from sight, exhibited him to Proserpine alone. But she, becoming equally enamored of his beauty, sought to obtain possession of him. The dispute between the goddesses was reconciled by Jupiter, who decided that Adonis should dwell six months of the year with Venus, and the remaining six months with Proserpine. This decree was executed; but Adonis, who was a great hunter, was afterwards killed on Mount Libanus by a wild boar, who thrust his tusk into his groin. Venus, inconsolable for his death, inundated his body with her tears, until Proserpine, in pity, restored him to life. Macrobius explains the allegory thus: 'Philosophers have given the name of Venus to the superior hemisphere of which we occupy a part, and that of Proserpine to the inferior. Hence Venus, among the Assyrians and Phenicians, is in tears, when the sun, in his annual course through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, passes over to our antipodes. For of these twelve signs, six are said to be superior, and six inferior. When the sun is in the inferior signs, and the days are consequently short, the goddess is supposed to weep the temporary death and privation of the Sun, detained by Proserpine, whom we regard as the divinity of the southern or antipodal regions. And Adonis is said to be restored to Venus, when the Sun, having traversed the six inferior signs, enters those of our hemisphere, bringing with it

an increase of light and lengthened days. The boar which is supposed to have killed Adonis is an emblem of winter; for this animal, covered with rough bristles, delights in cold, wet, and miry situations, and his favorite food is the acorn, a fruit peculiar to winter. The Sun is said, too, to be wounded by the winter, since, at that season, we lose its light and heat; effects which death produces upon animated beings. Venus is represented on Mount Libanus in an attitude of grief; her head, bent and covered with a veil, is sustained by her left hand near her breast, and her countenance is bathed with tears. This figure represents the earth in winter, when, veiled in clouds, and deprived of the Sun, its powers have become torpid. The fountains, like the eyes of Venus, are overflowing, and the fields, deprived of their floral ornaments, present a joyless appearance. But when the Sun, emerging from the southern regions of the earth, passes the vernal equinox, Venus is once more rejoiced, the fields are again embellished with flowers, the grass springs up in the meadows, and the trees recover their foliage.

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"The mysteries of Adonis were, at one time, introduced into Judea, where the Hebrew women were accustomed to hold an annual lamentation for him, under the name of Tammuz, of which Ezekiel speaks, viii. 14: 'Behold there sat women weeping for Tammuz.' According to Calmet and Faber, Adonis was also identical with Baal-peor, the idol of the Moabites, mentioned in the twenty-fifth chapter of Numbers.

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"Julius Fermicius, a Christian writer of the fourth century, thus describes a portion of the Adonisian ceremonies:

"'On a certain night an image is laid out upon a bed, and

bewailed in mournful strains. At length, when they are satiated with their fictitious lamentation, light is introduced, and the priest, having first anointed the mouths of all those who had been weeping, whispers with a gentle murmur: *Trust ye, initiates,* for the god being saved, out of pains salvation shall arise to us.'

"*Hence the ceremonies were a representation of the death and resurrection of Adonis in the person of the aspirant.*"—*Lexicon.*

'DRUIDS. * * * * The druidical ceremonies of initiation, according to Oliver, 'bore an undoubted reference to the salvation of Noah and his seven companions in the ark.' Indeed, all the ancient mysteries appear to have been arkite in their general character. Their places of initiation were of various forms; circular, because a circle was an emblem of the universe; or oval, in allusion to the mundane egg, from which, according to the Egyptians, our first parents issued; or serpentine, because a serpent was the symbol of Hu, the druidical Noah; or winged, to represent the motion of the Divine Spirit; or cruciform, because a cross was the emblem of regeneration. Their only covering was the *clouded canopy,* because they deemed it absurd to confine the Omnipotent beneath a roof, and they were constructed of embankments of earth, and of unhewn stones, *unpolluted with a metal tool.* No one was permitted to enter their sacred retreats, unless *he bore a chain.* The chief priest or hierophant, was called the Archdruid. Their grand periods of initiation were quarterly, taking place on the days when the sun reached his equinoctial and solstitial points, which at that remote period were the 13th of February, the 1st of May, the 19th of August, and the 1st of November. The principal of these was the 1st of May

(which, according to Mr. Higgins, was the festival of the Sun entering into Taurus), and the May-day celebration which still exists among us, is a remnant of the druidical rites. It was not lawful to commit their ceremonies or doctrines to writing, as we learn from Cæsar, and hence the ancient Greek and Roman writers have been enabled to give us but little information on this subject.

"*The institution was divided into three degrees or classes, the lowest being the Bards; the second the Faides, or Vates, and the highest the Druids.* Much mental preparation and physical purification were used previously to admission into the first degree. The aspirant was clothed with the three sacred colors, white, blue, and green; white as the symbol of Light, blue of Truth, and green of Hope. When the rites of initiation were passed, the tri-colored robe was changed for one of green; in the second degree, the candidate was clothed in blue, and having surmounted all the dangers of the third, and arrived at the summit of perfection, he received the red tiara and flowing mantle of purest white. *The ceremonies were numerous, the physical proofs painful, and the mental trials appalling. They commenced in the first degree with placing the aspirant in the pastos, bed, or coffin, where his symbolical death was represented, and they terminated in the third by his regeneration, or restoration to life, from the womb of the giantess Ceridwin, and the committal of the body of the newly-born to the waves in a small boat, symbolical of the ark.* The result was, generally, that he succeeded in reaching the safe landing-place that represented Mount Ararat,* but if his arm was

* If we look at the written story of the landing of the Ark on Mount Ararat as a divine fable, we may see that man, as the microcosm, is the Ark, containing all animate existence in pairs, love and hate, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, &c., symbolized by animals, as

weak, or his heart failed, death was the almost inevitable consequence. If he refused the trial, through timidity, he was contemptuously rejected, and declared for ever ineligible to participate in the sacred rites. But if he undertook it and succeeded, he was joyously invested with all the privileges of druidism.

"*The doctrines of the Druids were the same as those entertained by Pythagoras. They taught the existence of one Supreme Being; a future state of rewards and punishments; the immortality of the soul, and a metempsychosis; and the object of their mystic rites was to communicate the doctrines in symbolic language.*"—*Lexicon.*

"EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES. Egypt was the cradle of all the mysteries of Paganism. At one time in possession of all the learning and religion that was to be found in the world, it extended into other nations the influence of its sacred rites and its secret doctrines. The importance, therefore, of the Egyptian mysteries, will entitle them to a more diffusive ex-

some men are said to have the disposition of the lion, others that of the wolf, others that of the fox, the eagle, the crow, the dove, the lamb, &c. The Ark floats helplessly in nature, at the mercy of its winds and waves, until it reaches the Mount, or Truth of GOD, &c. But it is the just man that is preserved, with all the animals subordinated within him. The Truth of nature represented in this fiction, which, no doubt, owes its origin to some ancient secret society, recommended it to other similar societies, in which it was commemorated by imposing ceremonies, accounting for many mysterious allusions in ancient writings, which are referred, by Faber, to what he calls *Arkite* ceremonies. The same "Legend" teaches the immortality of the soul, or the preservation of the "Just" in death, symbolized by the flood.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

planation than has been awarded to the examination of the other rites of spurious Free Masonry.

"The priesthood of Egypt constituted a sacred caste, in whom the sacerdotal functions were hereditary. They exercised also an important part in the government of the state, and the kings of Egypt were but the first subjects of its priests. They had originally organized, and continued to control the ceremonies of initiation. *Their doctrines were of two kinds, exoteric or public, which were communicated to the multitude, and esoteric, or secret, which were revealed only to a chosen few;* and to obtain them, it was necessary to pass through an initiation, which, as we shall see, was characterized by the severest trials of courage and fortitude.

"The secret doctrines of the Egyptian rites related to the gods, the creation and government of the world, and the nature and condition of the human soul. In their initiations, says Oliver, they informed the candidate that the mysteries were received from Adam, Seth, and Enoch, and they called the perfectly initiated candidate *Al-om-jah*, from the name of the Deity. *Secrecy was principally inculcated, and all their lessons were taught by symbols.* Many of these have been preserved. With them, *a point within a circle*, was the symbol of the Deity surrounded by eternity; the *globe* was a symbol of the supreme and eternal GOD; a serpent with a tail in his mouth, was emblematic of eternity; a child sitting on the lotos was a symbol of the sun; a palm-tree, of victory; a staff, of authority; an ant, of knowledge; a goat, of fecundity; a wolf, of aversion; the right hand, with the fingers open, of plenty; and the left hand closed, of protection."—*Lexicon.*

"ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES. * * * * The qualifications for initiation were maturity of age, and purity of conduct. A character, free from suspicion of immorality, was ab-

solutely required in the aspirant. Nero, on this account, did not dare, when in Greece, to offer himself as a candidate for initiation. The privilege was at first confined to natives of Greece, but it was afterwards extended to foreigners. *Significant symbols were used as means of instruction, and words of recognition were communicated to the initiated. In these regulations, as well as in the gradual advancement of the candidate from one degree to another, that resemblance to our own institution is readily perceived, which has given to these, as well as to the other ancient mysteries, the appropriate name of Spurious Free Masonry.* The following passage of an ancient author, preserved by Stobæus, and quoted by Warburton in the 2d Book of his Divine Legation, *is too interesting to Free Masons to be omitted:*

[N. B.]—" 'The mind is affected and agitated in death just as it is in initiation into the grand mysteries; and word answers to word, as well as thing to thing; for τελευτᾶν is, to die; and τελεῖσθαι, to be initiated. The first stage is nothing but errors and uncertainties; laborious wanderings; a rude and fearful march through night and darkness. And now arrived on the verge of death and initiation, everything wears a dreadful aspect; it is all horror, trembling, sweating, and affrightment. But this scene once over, *a miraculous and divine* LIGHT *displays itself*, and shining plains and flowery meadows open on all hands before them. Here they are entertained with hymns and dances; with the *sublime doctrines of faithful knowledge, and with reverend and holy visions.* And now become perfect and initiated, *they are* FREE,* and no longer under

* The reader may see what Goethe has to say of this artificial process of making "Free" men in Meister's Apprenticeship, Bk. VIII. chap. 5, from which *novel* (?) he may gather many open hints of Masonic proceedings—if he will read with attentive eyes. When

restraint; but crowned and triumphant, they walk up and down the regions of the blessed; converse with pure and holy men, and celebrate the sacred mysteries at pleasure.'"—*Lexicon.*

In DR. OLIVER'S account of the Mysteries of Bacchus, we read: "The first actual ceremony among the Greeks was to purify the aspirant with water, and to crown him with myrtle, because the myrtle-tree was sacred to Proserpine; after which he was free from arrest during the celebrations. He was then introduced into a small cave or vestibule to be invested with the sacred habiliments; after which his conductor delivered him over to the mystagogue, who then commenced the initiation with the prescribed formula, Εκας, Εκας, εστε βεβηλοι, *Depart hence, all ye profane;* and the guide addressed the aspirant by exhorting him to call forth all his courage and fortitude, as the process on which he was now about to enter was of the most appalling nature. And being led forward through a series of dark passages and dismal caverns, to represent the erratic state of the Ark while floating on the troubled surface of the diluvian waters, the machinery opens upon him. He first hears the distant thunder pealing through the vault of heaven, accompanied by the howling of dogs and wild beasts —an apt representation of the confusion which prevailed

Masons, under oath of secresy, write of their mysteries, they are obliged to write in mystery, and, like Swedenborg and like Goethe, also, must maintain a death-like silence as to what they have written, making no explanations, or if they answer questions, this must be done in like mystery. Goethe, in Meister, has merely used some of the mystic ceremonies for the purpose of exhibiting, after a manner of his own, a journey into the spiritual world.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

amongst the multiplicity of domestic and ferocious animals during the period of Noah's confinement in the Ark. These terrific noises rapidly approach, and the din becomes tremendous, reverberated, as it doubtless was, in endless repetitions, from the echoing vaults and lofty caverns within whose inextricable mazes he was now immured. Flashes of vivid light now broke in upon him, and rendered the prevailing darkness more visible; and by the momentary illumination he beheld the appearances by which he was surrounded. Monstrous shapes and apparitions, demoniacal figures, grinning defiance at the intruder; mystical visions and flitting shadows, unreal phantoms of a dog-like form, overwhelm him with terror." In this state of horrible apprehension and darkness, he was kept *three days and nights*.* [In *italics* in the original—for what purpose the reader may divine.]

"With passions thus excited, the aspirant was now made to perform the *aphanism*, or ceremonies commemorative of the mystical death of Bacchus. He was covered with the pastos or bed; or in other words he was subjected to confinement in a close cell, that he might reflect seriously, in solitude and darkness, on the business he was engaged in; and be reduced to a proper state of mind for the reception of sublime and

* Fab. Pag. Idol., vol. viii., p. 156. This ceremony had a particular and intimate connection with the Egyptian plague of *darkness*, says Faber. "The scriptural account of it is very brief, yet it sets forth one circumstance of high importance. There was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt *three days*; they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for *three days*. It appears, then, that the duration of the preternatural darkness was precisely equal to that of the darkness of the Mysteries. (Fab. ut supra.) †

† The reader may readily find another parallel for this.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

mysterious truths. *This was the symbolical death of the mysteries; and the deliverance from confinement was the act of regeneration or new-birth;* and hence the renovated aspirant was termed διφυης or TWICE BORN; *once from the womb of his natural mother, and again from the pastos of initiation.*"

"HOURS OF WORK. * * * * The reason given by the ancients for the selection of night as the time for initiation, is equally applicable to the system of Free Masonry. '*Darkness,*' *says Oliver,* '*was an emblem of death, and death was a prelude to resurrection. It will be at once seen, therefore, in what manner the doctrine of the resurrection was inculcated and exemplified in these remarkable institutions.*"

"*Death and the resurrection* were the doctrines taught in the ancient mysteries; and night and darkness were necessary to add to the sacred awe and reverence which these doctrines ought always to inspire in the rational and contemplative mind. *The same doctrines form the very groundwork of Free Masonry, and as the Master Mason, to use the language of Hutchinson,* '*represents a man saved from the grave of iniquity and raised to the faith of salvation,*' *darkness and night are the appropriate accompaniments to the solemn ceremonies which demonstrate this profession.*"—LEXICON.

"MYSTERIES. * * * * The most important of these mysteries were those of Mithras, celebrated in Persia; of Osiris and Isis, celebrated in Egypt; of Eleusis, instituted in Greece; and the Scandinavian and Druidical rites, which were confined to the Gothic and Celtic tribes. In all these various mysteries, we find a singular unity of design, clearly indicating a common origin, and a purity of doctrine as evidently proving that this common origin was not to be sought for in the popular theology of the Pagan world. *The ceremo-*

nies of initiation were all funereal in their character. They celebrated the death and the resurrection of some cherished being, either the object of esteem as a hero, or of devotion as a god. Subordination of degrees was instituted, and the candidate was subjected to probations varying in their character and severity; the rites were practised in the darkness of night, and often amid the gloom of impenetrable forests, or subterranean caverns; and *the full fruition of knowledge, for which so much labor was endured, and so much danger incurred, was not attained until the aspirant, well tried and thoroughly purified, had reached the place of wisdom and of light.*

"These mysteries undoubtedly owed their origin to the desire on the part of the priests of establishing an esoteric philosophy, in which should be taught the sublime truths which they had derived (though they themselves at length forgot the source), from the instruction of GOD himself through the ancient patriarchs. By this confinement of these doctrines to a system of secret knowledge, guarded by the most rigid rites, could they only expect to preserve them from the superstitions, innovations, and corruptions of the world as it then existed. 'The distinguished few,' says Oliver, 'who retained their fidelity, uncontaminated by the contagion of evil example, would soon be able to estimate the superior benefits of an isolated institution, which afforded the advantage of a select society, and kept at an unapproachable distance the profane scoffer, whose presence might pollute their pure devotions and social converse, by contumelious language or unholy mirth.' And doubtless the prevention of this intrusion, and the preservation of these sublime truths, was the original object of the institution of the ceremonies of initiation, and the adoption of other means by which the initiated could be recognized, and the uninitiated excluded. Such was the

opinion of Warburton, who says that 'the mysteries were at first the retreats of sense and virtue, till time corrupted them in most of the gods.

* * * * "The Magi, Brahmins, Gymnosophists, Druids and priests of Egypt lived thus in sequestered habitations and subterranean caves, and obtained great reputation by their discoveries in astronomy, chemistry, and mechanics, by their purity of morals, and by their knowledge of the science of legislation. It was in these schools, says M. Robin, that the first sages and legislators of antiquity were formed, and in them *he supposes the doctrines taught to have been the unity of God and the immortality of the soul;* and it was from these mysteries, and their symbols and hieroglyphics, that the exuberant fancy of the Greeks drew much of their mythology.

"The candidates for initiation were not only expected to be of a clear and unblemished character, and free from crime, but their future conduct was required to be characterized by the same purity and innocence. They were, therefore, obliged, by solemn engagements, to commence a new life of piety and virtue, upon which they entered by a severe course of penance.

"The mysteries were held in the highest respect, by both the government and the people. *It was believed that he who was initiated would not only enjoy an increased share of virtue and happiness in this world, but would be entitled to celestial honors in the next.* 'Thrice happy they,' says Sophocles, 'who descended to the shades below after having beheld these rites; for they alone have life in Hades, while all others suffer there every kind of evil.' And Isocrates declares, that 'those who have been initiated in the mysteries, entertain better hopes, both as to the end of life and the whole of futurity.'

* * * * * * * * *

"*On the subject of their relation to the rites of Free Ma-*

sonry, to which they bear in many respects so remarkable a resemblance, that some connection seems necessarily implied, there are two principal theories. The one, is that embraced and taught by Dr. Oliver, namely, that they are but deviations from that common source, both of them and of Free Masonry, the patriarchal mode of worship established by God himself. With this pure system of truth, he supposes the science of Free Masonry to have been coeval and identified. But the truths thus revealed by divinity, came at length to be doubted or rejected through the imperfection of human reason, and though the visible symbols were retained in the mysteries of the Pagan world, their true interpretation was lost.

"That the instruction communicated in the mysteries of Paganism were an impure derivation from the sublime truths of the patriarchal theology, I have no hesitation in believing. But that they were an emanation from Free Masonry, as we now understand the terms, I am not yet prepared to admit, notwithstanding the deep veneration in which I hold the learning of Dr. Oliver. I prefer, therefore, the second theory, which, leaving the origin of the mysteries to be sought in the patriarchal doctrines, where Oliver has placed it, finds the connection between them and Free Masonry commencing at the building of King Solomon's Temple. *Over the construction of this building, Hiram, the Architect of Tyre, presided. At Tyre the mysteries of Bacchus had been introduced by the Dionysian Artificers, and into their fraternity Hiram, in all probability, had, as I have already suggested, been admitted.* Free Masonry, whose tenets had always existed in purity among the immediate descendants of the patriarchs, added now to its doctrines the guard of secrecy, which, as Dr. Oliver himself remarks, was necessary to preserve them from perversion or pollution.

"This, then, it seems to me is the true connection between the mysteries and speculative Free Masonry. They both emanated from one common source, but the former soon losing much of their original purity, were compelled, in order to preserve the little that was left, to have recourse to the invention of ceremonies and modes of recognition, and a secret doctrine, by means of which all but a select and worthy few were excluded. *These ceremonies, and especially this symbolic or secret mode of communicating instruction, so admirable in themselves, were afterward adopted by the Free Masons,** who had retained the ancient tenets in their original purity, but they divested them of their heathenish allusions, and adapted them to the divine system which they had preserved unimpaired.

* * * * * * * * *

"Faber, who sought an Arkite origin for everything, says that 'the initiations into the mysteries scientifically represented the mythic descent into Hades, and the return from thence to the light of day, by which was meant the entrance into the ark and the subsequent liberation from its dark enclosure. *They all equally related to the allegorical disappearance, or death, or descent of the great father, at their commencement; and to his invention, or revival, or return from Hades, at their conclusion.*'"—*Lexicon.*

In Dr. OLIVER'S account of the Mysteries in Britain, we read: "The aspirant for mere initiation, was clad in a robe striped alternately with *white*, *sky-blue*, and *green*, which were the sacred colors of Druidism, and emblematical of *light*, *truth*, and *hope*; and *confined in a cromlech without food three days*

* "Free Masons."—Yet Dr. Mackey traces the Free Masons to the Essenes.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

prior to his admission into each of the two first degrees; that is, he was placed in the pastos with the usual ceremonies on the evening of the first day, remained an entire day enclosed, or DEAD *in the language of the mysteries, and was liberated for initiation, or in other words, restored to life on the third day.*" —*Lexicon.*

"NOACHIDÆ, OR NOACHITES. The descendants of Noah. A term applied to Free Masons. Noah having alone preserved the true name and worship of God, amid a race of impious idolaters, Free Masons claim to be his descendants, because they still preserve that pure religion which distinguished this second father of the human race from the rest of the world. And even when his descendants began again, in the plains of Shinar, to forget the Almighty, and to wander from the path of purity, the principles of Noah were still perpetuated by that portion of his race whom the Free Masons of the present day regard as their early predecessors. Hence, Free Masons call themselves Noachidæ, or the sons of Noah.

"This respect for Noah, as the father and founder of the masonic system of theology, was not confined to the pure Free Masons, but extended, even unconsciously, to the seceders from its spirit, those whom Oliver calls the Spurious Free Masons of antiquity. In all their mysteries, they commemorated, even after they had lost the true history, the descent of Noah into the ark, and his subsequent exodus. *The entrance into initiation was symbolic of his entrance into the vessel of his salvation; his detention in the ark was represented by the darkness and the pastos, coffin, or couch in which the aspirant was placed, and the exit of Noah, after the forty days of deluge, was seen in the manifestation of the candidate, when, being fully tried and proved, he was admitted to full light, amid*

the rejoicings of the surrounding initiates, who received him in the sacellum or holy place."—Lexicon.

"ORPHIC MYSTERIES. These Grecian rites were only a modification of the mysteries of Bacchus or Dionysus, and were thus called, because it was said that Orpheus first introduced the worship of Bacchus into Greece from Egypt. They differed, however, from the other pagan rites, in not being confined to the priesthood, but in being practised by a fraternity who did not possess the sacerdotal functions. *The initiated commemorated in their ceremonies, which were performed at night, the murder of Bacchus by the Titans, and his final restoration to the supreme government of the universe, under the name of Phanes."*

* * * * * * * * *

"In the day, the initiates were crowned with fennel and poplar, and carried serpents in their hands, or twined them around their heads, crying with a loud voice, *enos, sabos*, and danced to the sound of the mystic words, *hyes, attes, attes, hyes.* At night the mystes were bathed in the lustral water, and having been rubbed over with clay and bran, he was clothed in the skin of a fawn, and, having risen from the bath, he exclaimed, '*I have departed from evil and have found the good.*'"—*Lexicon.*

"SUPPORTS OF THE LODGE. The institution of masonry, venerable for its antiquity, and its virtuous character, is said to be supported by *Wisdom, Strength*, and *Beauty*;* for the wisdom of its eminent founders was engaged in its first

* Here is the Masonic Trinity—sometimes represented by Solomon, by King Hiram of Tyre, and by Hiram Abif.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

design; the strength of its organization has enabled it to survive the fall of empires, and the changes of languages, religions, and manners which have taken place since its formation; and the beauty of holiness is exhibited in the purity and virtue that it inculcates, and in the morality of life which it demands of all its children.

"Our lodges, thus supported, will find in these columns another analogy to their great prototype, the Temple of Jerusalem. For that mighty fabric was designed by the *wisdom* of Solomon, King of Israel, who found *strength* to carry on the great undertaking in the assistance and friendship of Hiram, King of Tyre; *and* BEAUTY *to adorn the structure in the architectural skill and taste of Hiram, the widow's son.*"*—*Lexicon.*

"COFFIN. In the ancient mysteries, the aspirant could not claim a participation in the highest secrets until he had been placed in the Pastos, Bed or Coffin. *The placing him in the coffin was called the symbolical death of the mysteries, and his deliverance was termed a raising from the dead. Hence arose a peculiarity in the Greek verb* teleutao, *which, in the active voice, signified 'I die,' and in the middle voice, 'I am initiated.'*"—*Lexicon.*

"PASTOS. (Greek παστος, a couch). *The pastos was a chest or close cell, in the pagan mysteries, (among the Druids, an excavated stone,) in which the aspirant was for some time placed, to commemorate the mystical death of the god. This constituted the symbolical death, which was common to all the mysteries.* In the Arkite rites the pastos represented the ark

* It may seem strange, but it is true, that this, as a history, would be profane, but as a fable it becomes divine, and teaches eternal Truth.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

in which Noah was confined. *We may refer it to the coffin among masonic emblems.*"—*Lexicon.*

In Dr. OLIVER's Signs and Symbols, as elsewhere in his writings, are many allusions to the ARK. Here is one out of many:—

"The consequences of an open renunciation of the Deity, which was the probable cause of the general Deluge, were however concealed by the crafty founders of idolatry, under the same veil which obscured the Great First Cause; and everything relating to that event, though transmitted with unequivocal exactness, was studiously enveloped in a web of mystery, calculated to lead the inquirer astray.

"Hence the jargon about Deucalion, the Atlantians, Typhon, and Osiris, the Argonauts, and *all the various fables with which different nations have been equally amused and misled.** The truth was concealed with great art, under imposing ceremonies and fearful denunciations. Solemn oaths were administered to restrain the inquiry within certain prescribed limits; and the dictatorial hierophant, invested with uncontrollable authority, could draw the line with his magic wand, and say even to the initiated, 'This is the boundary of your knowledge; thus far shall ye come, and no farther.'

* Out of a multitude of ancient "fables," of a common type, Dr. Oliver arbitrarily selects one as the original and as "*actual*;" and is confident that the followers of every other fable were "amused and misled" by fictions; every one of whom, if they had an opportunity, would return the compliment, and with just as good reason. It is better, in my opinion, to class the fables together, and seek the truth in nature they were intended to shadow out. If we can find it, the fable is something to us; if we cannot, it is of no value.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

"And this accounts for the comparative ignorance of the adept himself; for the ineffable secrets were intrusted to none but kings and priests; and were conveyed, almost solely, by oral communication. Thus an extraordinary ceremony, referring to the deluge, was used in the initiations, which shows how mysteriously that event was preserved and transmitted. *The violent death of some unhappy individual was here celebrated, whose body they affected to have lost; and much time was expended and many ceremonies used in the search; even the aspirant himself was made figuratively to die and to descend into the infernal regions, for the purpose of ascertaining the fate of him whose disappearance they ceased not to deplore.* This part of the ceremony was performed in *darkness;* and was accompanied with loud and ceaseless wailings and lamentations. *The body at length being found, the aspirant was passed through the regenerating medium, and thus was said to be raised from the dead and born again.* This was the commencement of joy and gladness; and the initiated was invested with his symbols, amidst universal rejoicing and acclamation.

"*Such is the pattern on which all the mysteries were formed; and it may be needless to repeat that the ceremony bears an evident reference, amongst other remarkable occurrences, to the descent of Noah into the darkness of the ark, which was his emblematical Coffin, where he was figuratively said to have been in a state resembling death; and his egress thence considered as a new birth, and a restoration to the blessings of life and liberty.*"

"RESURRECTION. *A resurrection from the grave and a future immortality were the great lessons which it was the design of the ancient mysteries to inculcate. In like manner,*

*by a symbolic ceremony of great impressiveness, the same sublime truths are made to constitute the end and object of Free Masonry in the third degree, or as it has been called by Hutchinson, 'the Master's Order.'" *—Lexicon.*

"TRADITIONS. *The legends or traditions of Free Masonry constitute a very considerable and important part of its ritual.* In many instances these traditions have been corrupted by anachronisms and other errors, which have naturally crept into them during a long series of oral transmission. No one, therefore, can for a moment contend that all the legends and traditions of the order are, to the very letter, historical facts. All that can be claimed for them is, that in some there is a great deal of truthful narrative, more or less overlaid with fiction; in others, simply a mere substratum of history; and *in others, nothing more than an idea, to which the legend or myth is indebted for its existence, and of which it is, as a symbol, the exponent.*

The intelligent Mason will always, however, be able, after a little consideration, to separate the substratum of truth from the superstructure of fiction which has been imposed upon it. *And then, what is presented as a tradition, will often be found to be a mere myth or allegory, whose symbolic teaching is of great beauty and importance.*† It is a part of the science of Free Masonry to elaborate out of these traditions the truth, symbolic or historical, which they are intended to convey, and to distinguish a tradition founded in fact, from one which is

* If any one wishes to learn what is practiced in the third degree among Masons more plainly, he had better seek admission into the fraternity.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

† Without doubt Dr. Mackey is right.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

based upon a myth, so as to assign to the annals and the poetry of the order their respective portions."—*Lexicon.*

"LEGEND. A legend may properly be defined a traditional tale. All countries and all religions have their legends. *In the ancient mysteries there was always a legend on which much symbolical instruction was based.* These legends of the mysteries, although they varied as to the subject of the history in each, yet all agree in this, that they were funereal in their character—that *they commemorated the death by violence, and the subsequent resurrection, of some favorite hero or hero-god—and that, beginning with lamentation, they ended in joy.*

"'*In like manner Free Masonry has its legends and allegorical references,* many of them founded in fact, and capable of unquestionable proof, while others are based on Jewish traditions, and only invested with probability, while they equally inculcate and enforce the most solemn and important truths.' *Of these legends, the one which may, by way of excellence, be called* 'THE LEGEND,'* and which more particularly is connected with the Master's Degree, it may be supposed was substituted by our ancient brethren, when they united themselves at the Temple with the Dionysians, for the pagan and apocryphal legend of Bacchus, celebrated by that society."—*Lexicon.*

"LODGE ROOM. * * * * *The proper images or emblems* [of a Lodge] *are to be taken from the Bible, which alone contains the authentic records of ancient masonry.*"—*Lexicon.*

* This is the Legend of Hiram Abif, the widow's son, the central figure in modern ceremonies. The widow may be the virgin Isis (Nature), or the Jewish Church, according as the story is related.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

"*Symbolic Signification of the Lodge.—Symbolically a Mason's Lodge is a representation of the world.** Its clouded canopy is an emblem of those mansions of unutterable bliss, where the Grand Master of the Universe forever reigns, whose all-seeing eye beholds, with unceasing complacency, the efforts of his creatures to do his will. To that abode of the blessed the Mason is taught to aspire, while the path is indicated by the theological ladder, whose principal rounds are faith, hope, and charity. The Sun, the eternal fountain of light, the unwearied ruler of the day, shines in the lodge, a bright exponent of his Creator's power, while the Moon, the glorious orb of night, repeats the lesson of divine munificence. Here, too, are we taught, that the vast universe over which this Omnipotence presides, was no work of chance, but that its foundations are laid in wisdom, supported by strength, and adorned with beauty. And as the presence of the Almighty illuminates with refulgent splendor the most distant recesses of the universe, so is the lodge enlightened by the presence of his revealed will. *And hence the Bible, as it is of all lights the most pure, is to the Mason the most indispensable.*† And, finally, as this world, vast in its extent and complicated in its motions, is governed and regulated with unceasing concord and harmony, so is a lodge controlled and directed by the same spirits of peace, which, emanating in brotherly love, relief, and truth, find their full fruition in universal charity."—*Lexicon.*

"EXTENT OF THE LODGE. Boundless is the extent of a Mason's Lodge—in height to the topmost heaven; in

* In other words, a Lodge is an emblem of Nature.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

† Doubtless: but it needs interpretation.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

depth to the central abyss; in length from east to west; in breadth from north to south."—*Lexicon.*

"TRUTH. Truth is one of the three principal tenets of our order, Brotherly Love and Relief being the other two. To be 'true and trusty' is one of the first lessons in which the aspirant is instructed. *All other things are mortal and transitory, but Truth alone is immutable and eternal;* it is the attribute of Him in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of changing."—*Lexicon.*

"NAME OF GOD. In addition to what has been said upon this subject in the article *Jehovah*, we may observe, that an allusion to the unutterable name of GOD, is to be found in the doctrines and ceremonies of other nations, as well as the Jews. It is said to have been used as the pass-word in the Egyptian mysteries. In the rites of Hindostan, it was bestowed upon the aspirant, under the triliteral form AUM, at the completion of his initiation, and then only by whispering it in his ear. The Cabalists reckoned seventy-two names of God, the knowledge of which imparted to the possessor magical powers. The Druids invoked the omnipotent and all-preserving power, under the symbol I. O. W. * * * *

"*In fact, the name of God must be taken in Free Masonry as symbolical of truth, and then the search for it will be nothing else but the search after truth, the true end and aim of the masonic science.** The subordinate names are the subordinate modifications of truth, but the ineffable tetragrammaton will be the sublimity and perfection of Divine Truth, to

* Dr. Mackey is very candid, and we, who are "without," owe him many thanks.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

which all good Masons and all good men are seeking to approach, whether it be by the aid of the theological ladder, or passing through the pillars of Strength and Establishment, or wandering in the mazes of darkness, beset on all sides by dangers, or traveling weary and worn over rough and rugged roads, *whatever be the direction of our journey or how accomplished, light and truth, the Urim and Thummim, are the ultimate objects of our search as Free Masons.*"—*Lexicon.*

"SPURIOUS FREE MASONRY. Dr. Oliver, one of the most learned and philosophic Masons of this or perhaps any other time, contends that 'the science which we now denominate Speculative Masonry, was coeval, at least, with the creation of our globe, and that the far-famed mysteries of idolatry were a subsequent institution, founded on similar principles, with the design of conveying unity and permanence to the false worship, which it otherwise could never have acquired.' This schism from the pure and original source has been designated by the name of the Spurious Free Masonry of Paganism, to distinguish it from the purer system, which this theory supposes to have descended in a direct and uninterrupted line to the Free Masons of the present day.

"In a later work, Dr. Oliver still further explains his idea of the Spurious Free Masonry. The legends and truths which were transmitted pure through the race of Seth, were altered and corrupted by that of Cain, and much confusion arose in consequence of the frequent intercommunications of these two races before the Deluge, though the truth would still be understood by the faithful. Of these was Noah, who, out of all these deviations of the antediluvians, was enabled to distinguish truth from falsehood, and to transmit the former in a direct line, according to Rosenberg, through Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

Levi, Kelhoth, Amram, Moses, Joshua, the Elders, the Prophets, and the wise men to Solomon. Hence Free Masons are sometimes called Noachidæ, the descendants and disciples of Noah.

"There was, in after times, a communication between one branch of this Spurious Free Masonry and the true system. This took place at the Temple of Solomon, between the Jewish Masons and the Dionysian Artificers, when true Free Masonry borrowed its present organization from the greater practical wisdom of the Dionysian, without, however, surrendering any of its truth. *And the bond of this union between the two bodies which had so long divided the world, was Hiram Abif, who was himself a member of both systems—of the true system by birth, as the son of Jewish parents—and of the spurious by profession and residence, as an artificer of Tyre.*"*—*Lexicon.*

Dr. OLIVER makes a remarkable citation from Faber, in a note at the close of his History of Initiations, to wit: "I subjoin, without comment, the following observations of the learned and intelligent Faber, on the *machinery* of the Apocalypse, which he thinks was borrowed from that of the Mysteries. In this book 'we find the pure Church described as a woman clothed with the sun, and standing upon the crescent of the moon; while a corrupted Church is exhibited

* Hiram Abif, we see, plays the part of a Mediator. These writers do not *intend* to disclose Masonic secrets; but it is easy to see that, in theory, the Jews, as the people of GOD, represent the inner life, while the Syrians represent the outer life. To bring these two into harmony is the great object. For this purpose a *third* principle is needed, and this is the Mediator—represented by Hiram Abif.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

to us, both under the image of a female floating upon the surface of many waters, and under that of a harlot using a monstrous beast as her vehicle. The former of these women, when about to bring forth her first-born, is attacked by a monstrous serpent, which spouts out, against her offspring, a deluge of water; but the earth opens its mouth, and receives the mighty inundation into the centrical abyss. The latter of them, under the mystic name of *the false prophet*, together with her bestial supporter, is said to be, at length, plunged alive into an infernal lake, burning with fire and brimstone. I cannot but think it sufficiently clear, that the whole of this machinery is palpably diluvian; and I believe it *to have been derived from that received imagery of the Patriarchal Church, which by a corrupted channel was admitted into Paganism.* It is impossible not to perceive that the woman standing upon the crescent is the very figure of the Samian Juno, or of the Egyptian Isis, who were represented in a precisely similar manner with reference to the lunar boat; that the attack upon the woman and her offspring, by the deluging serpent, which is frustrated by the earth's absorption of the waters, is perfectly analogous to the attack of the diluvian serpent Python or Typhon upon Latona and Horus, which is similarly frustrated by the destruction of that monster; and that the false Church, bearing the name of *Mystery*, floating on the mighty waters, or riding on a terrific beast, and ultimately plunged into the infernal lake, exhibits the very same aspect as the Great Mother of Paganism, sailing over the ocean, riding on her usual vehicle, the lion, venerated with certain appropriate Mysteries, and during the celebration of those Mysteries, plunged into the waters of a sacred lake, deemed the lake of Hades, I take it, that in the representation of the pure Church, *an ancient patriarchal scheme of symbolical*

machinery, derived most plainly from the events of the Deluge, and borrowed with the usual perverse misapplication by the contrivers of Paganism, has been reclaimed to its proper use; while, in the representation of the false Church, which, under a new name, revived the old Gentile demonolatry, the very imagery and language of the Gentile hierophants has, with singular propriety, been studiously adopted (Rev. xii., xvii. 1–5, xix. 20). I need scarcely remark that I am speaking solely of the apocalyptic *machinery*; of this, the origin will still be the same, however we may interpret the prophecies which are built upon it. *The whole machinery of the Apocalypse, from beginning to end, seems to me, very plainly, to have been borrowed from the machinery of the ancient Mysteries:* and this, if we consider the nature of the subject, was done with the very strictest attention to poetical decorum. St. John, himself, is made to personate *an aspirant* about to be initiated; and, accordingly, the images presented to his mind's eye closely resemble the pageants of the Mysteries, both in *their nature*, and in *order of succession*. The prophet first beholds a *door opened* in the magnificent temple of heaven; and into this he is invited to enter by the voice of one, who plays *the hierophant*. Here he witnesses the unsealing of *a sacred book*; and, forthwith he is appalled by a troup of *ghastly apparitions*, which flit in horrid succession before his eyes. Among these are pre-eminently conspicuous *a vast serpent*, the well-known symbol of the Great Father; and two portentous *wild beasts*, which severally come up out of the sea and out of the earth. Such hideous figures correspond with the canine phantoms of the Orgies, which seem to rise out of the ground, and with the polymorphic images of the principal hero god, who was universally deemed the offspring of the sea. Passing these terrific monsters in safety,

the prophet, constantly attended by his angel-hierophant, who acts the part of an interpreter, is conducted into the presence of a *female*, who is described as closely resembling the Great Mother of Pagan Theology. Like Isis, emerging from the sea, and exhibiting herself to the eyes of the aspirant, Apuleius, this female divinity, upborne upon the marine wild beast, appears to float upon the surface of many waters. She is said to be *an open and systematical harlot;* just as the Great Mother was the declared female principle of fecundity; and as she was always propitiated by literal fornication reduced to a religious system, and as the initiated were made to drink a prepared liquor out of a sacred goblet, so this harlot is represented as intoxicating the kings of the earth with the *golden cup* of her prostitution. On her forehead, the very name MYSTERY is inscribed; and the label teaches us that, in point of character, she is the *great universal mother* of idolatry. The nature of this Mystery the *officiating hierophant* undertakes to explain, and an important prophecy is most curiously and artfully veiled under the very language and imagery of the Orgies. To the sea-born Great Father was ascribed a three-fold state; he lived, he died, and he revived; and these changes of condition were duly exhibited in the Mysteries. To the sea-born wild beast is similarly ascribed a three-fold state; he lives, he dies, and he revives. While dead, he lies floating on the mighty ocean, just like Horus, or Osiris, Siva, or Vishnu; when he revives again, like those kindred deities, he emerges from the waves; and, whether dead or alive, he bears seven heads and ten horns, corresponding in number with the seven ark-preserved Rishis, and the ten aboriginal patriarchs. Nor is this all; as the worshipers of the Great Father bore his special mark or stigma, and were distinguished by his name, so the worshipers of the maritime beast equally

bear his mark, and are equally designated by his appellation. At length, however, *the first or doleful part* of these sacred Mysteries draws to a close, and *the last or joyful part* is rapidly approaching. After the prophet has beheld the enemies of God plunged into a dreadful lake, or inundation of liquid fire, which corresponds with the infernal lake, or deluge of the Orgies, he is introduced into *a splendidly illuminated region*, expressly adorned with the characteristics of that *Paradise* which was the ultimate scope of the ancient aspirants; while, *without* the holy gate of admission, are the whole multitude of the profane, *dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth or maketh a lie.*"* (Fab. Pag. Idol., vol. iii., p. 640–643.

"HIRAM THE BUILDER.† Among the workmen sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to Solomon, was one whom he styles 'a cunning man, endued with understanding,' and he is in another place described as 'a widow's son, of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work in all works in brass.' This is the workman to whom Solomon was indebted for the construction of all the ornaments of the Temple. Hiram calls him *Huram abi*, that is, 'Hiram my father;' which is an evidence of his high

* Why run this parallel so closely, if the author did not wish to intimate more than he chose to express?—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

† The reader must have noticed the many allusions to this Hiram the Builder, in the course of these citations from Masonic writings, and may ask the question—why is he called the Builder? Is not this the Carpenter's son? Matt. xiii. 55.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

standing at the Tyrian Court; for the title *ab*, or father, was among the Hebrews often bestowed as a title of honor and dignity, on the chief advisers and intimate friends of the king. Thus, Joseph, according to some commentators, is called *Abrech*, or the 'father of the king,' and this very Hiram is spoken of in Chronicles in the following words: *gnasah Huram Abif l'meleck Shlomo*, that is, 'did Huram his father, make to King Solomon.' The name given to this architect in the lodges, is derived from this passage, *Huram abif*, meaning in Hebrew, Hiram his father.

"This Hiram, from his profession as an architect, and his birth as a Tyrian was, in all probability, acquainted with the Dionysian fraternity, which society had extended itself to Tyre, and if so, the union in his person of the Tyrian* and Israelitish races, must have afforded him a favorable opportunity, as we have already suggested, of communicating the mysteries of that fraternity to the Jewish builders of the Temple."—*Lexicon.*

"WIDOW'S SON. *One of the most illustrious personages in Masonic history is so called, because he is described in Scripture as having been 'the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali.'*"—*Lexicon.*

* Among published Masonic songs, there is one in which Hiram (Abif) the Tyrian, is described as the Widow's Son, Sent To King Solomon; and it is remarkable that the few first lines exhibit the eight initial letters which Masons engrave in a circle, often about the size of a dime, and wear as an amulet, regarding it with a sense of awe and mystery something like that of a Catholic before the cross; and, indeed it refers to the same thing, differently expressed. Of course no sensible Mason sees in it anything but an emblem.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

"MASTER MASON. *The third degree in all the different rites. In this, which is the perfection of symbolic or ancient craft Masonry, the purest of truths are unveiled, amid the most awful ceremonies.** None but he who has visited the holy of holies, and traveled the *road of peril*, can have any conception of the Mysteries unfolded in this degree. Its solemn observances diffuse a sacred awe, and inculcate a lesson of religious truth; and it is not until the neophyte has reached this summit of our ritual, that he can exclaim with joyful accents, in the language of the sage of old, '*Eureka, Eureka,*' I have found at last the long-sought treasure. In the language of the learned and zealous Hutchinson, somewhat enlarged in its allusion, '*the Master Mason represents a man under the doctrine of love, saved from the grave of iniquity, and raised to the faith of salvation. It testifies our faith in the resurrection of the body, and, while it inculcates a practical lesson of prudence and unshrinking fidelity, it inspires the most cheering hope of that final reward which belongs alone to the 'just made perfect.*'

"*This was the last and highest of the three degrees in existence at the construction of the first temple, and it is, therefore, called 'the perfection of ancient craft Masonry.*' From the sublimity of the truths developed in it, and from the solemn nature of the ceremonies, it has received the appellation of the 'sublime degree.' From this degree alone can the officers of a lodge be chosen; and, though Fellow Crafts are permitted to speak, the privilege of voting is confined to Master Masons."—*Lexicon.*

"ESOTERIC AND EXOTERIC MASONRY. From two

* We shall presently see one of these ceremonies *unveiled* by Swedenborg.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

Greek words signifying interior and exterior. *The ancient philosophers, in the establishment of their respective sects, divided their schools into two kinds, exoteric and esoteric.* In the exoteric school, instruction was given in public places; the elements of science, physical and moral, were unfolded, and those principles which ordinary intelligence could grasp, and against which the prejudices of ordinary minds would not revolt were inculcated in places accessible to all whom curiosity or a love of wisdom congregated. But the more abstruse tenets of their philosophy were reserved for a chosen few, who, united in an esoteric school, received, in the secret recesses of the master's dwelling, lessons too strange to be acknowledged, too pure to be appreciated, by the vulgar crowd, who, in the morning, had assembled at the public lecture.

"*Thus, in some measure, is it with Masonry. Its system,* [the system of nature?] *taken as a whole, is, it is true, strictly esoteric in its construction. Its disciples are taught a knowledge which is forbidden to the profane, and it is only in the adytum* [the heart?] *of the lodge that these lessons are bestowed;* and yet, viewed in itself, and unconnected with the world without, Masonry contains within its bosom an exoteric and esoteric school, as palpably divided as were those of the ancient sects, with this simple difference, that the admission or the exclusion was in the latter case involuntary, and dependent solely on the will of the instructor, while in the former it is voluntary, and dependent only on the will and the wishes of the disciple. In the sense in which I wish to convey the terms, every Mason [every student of nature?], on his initiation, is exoteric—he beholds before him a beautiful fabric,* the exterior of which, alone, he has examined, and with this examination

* This "beautiful fabric" is universal nature, "represented" in a lodge.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

he may, possibly, remain satisfied—many, alas! too many, are. If so, he will remain an Exoteric Mason. But there are others, whose curiosity is not so easily gratified—they desire a further and more intimate knowledge of the structure than has been presented to their view—they enter and examine its internal form—they traverse its intricate passages, they explore its hidden recesses, and admire and contemplate its magnificent apartments—their knowledge of the edifice is thus enlarged, and with more extensive, they have purer, views of the principles of its construction, than have fallen to the lot of their less inquiring brethren. *These men become Esoteric Masons.* The hidden things of the order are, to them familiar as household words—they constitute the Masters in Israel, who are to guide and instruct the less informed—and to diffuse light over paths which, to all others, are obscure and dark.

"There is between these studious Masons and their slothful uninquiring brethren, the same difference in the views they take of Masonry, as there is between an artist and a peasant in their respective estimation of an old painting—it may be a Raphael or a Rubens. The peasant gazes with stupid wonder, or with cold indifference, on the canvas redolent with life, without the excitation of a single emotion in his barren soul. Its colors, mellowed to a rich softness by the hand of time, are to him less pleasing than the gaudy tints which glare upon the sign of his village inn; and its subject, borrowed from the deep lore of history, or the bold imaginings of poesy, are less intelligible to him than the daubed print which hangs conspicuously at his cottage fireside, and he is amazed to see this paltry piece of canvas bought with the treasures of wealth, and guarded with a care that the brightest jewel would demand in vain.

"But to the eye of the artist, how different the impression

conveyed! To him everything beams with light, and life, and beauty. To him, it is the voice of nature, speaking in the language of art. Prometheus-like, he sees the warm blood gushing through the blue veins, and the eye beaming with a fancied animation—the correctness of its outlines—the boldness of its fore-shortenings, where the limbs appear ready to burst from the canvas—the delicacy of its shadows, and the fine arrangement of its lights, are all before him, subjects of admiration, on which he could for ever gaze, and examples of instruction which he would fain imitate.

"And whence arises this difference of impression, produced by the same object on two different individuals? It is not from genius alone, for that, unaided, brings no light to the mind, though it prepares it for its reception. *It is cultivation which enlarges the intellect, and fits it as a matrix for the birth of those truths which find in the bosom of ignorance no abiding place.*

"And thus it is with Masonry. As we cultivate it as a science its objects become extended—as our knowledge of it increases, new lights burst forth from its inmost recess, which, to the inquisitive Mason, burn with bright effulgence; but to the inattentive and unsearching, are but as dim and fitful glimmerings, only rendering 'darkness visible.'

"*Let every Mason ask himself if he be of the esoteric or the exoteric school of Masonry? Has he studied its hidden beauties and excellencies? Has he explored its history, and traced out the origin and the erudite meaning of its symbols?* Or has he supinely rested content with the knowledge he received at the pedestal, nor sought to pass beyond the porch of the Temple? If so, he is not prepared to find in our royal art those lessons which adorn the path of life, and cheer the bed of death; and for all purposes, except those of social meeting, and friendly recognition, Masonry is to him a sealed book.

"But, if he has ever felt a desire to seek and cultivate the internal philosophy of Masonry, let him advance in those rarely trodden paths; the labor of such a pursuit is itself refreshment, and the reward great. Fresh flowers bloom at every step; and the prospect on every side is so filled with beauty and enchantment, that, ravished at the sight, he will rush on with enthusiasm from fact to fact, and from truth to truth, until the whole science of Masonry lies before him invested with new form and sublimity."—*Lexicon.*

SECTION XX.

With respect to the extracts in the preceding section, from the writings of two distinguished Masonic Lecturers, I have but little to say, my purpose being accomplished by merely reciting them. The general reader, I doubt not, will thank me for calling his attention to works so deeply interesting. Their importance is by no means confined to the circle of initiates. While not a Mason myself, I have nevertheless consulted Masonic books, and that, too, very carefully; though from no disposition to pry into forbidden secrets. I have long been convinced that no mere ceremony can, of itself, communicate positive knowledge; and much less can we suppose that an oral *word* of any number of syllables, can convey into the soul of man a knowledge of the ineffable One. This, together with an instinctive aversion to coming under artificial obligations of every sort, especially those imposing secresy in regard to important knowledge, has hitherto restrained me from presuming to offer myself as a candidate for admission into a lodge. I wish to be the judge, myself, as to the propriety of speaking or remaining silent with respect to any point of knowledge

I may fancy myself in possession of. Nevertheless, as Masonic books are public, I have consulted them, as I have other works, for such information as I might glean from them.

In reading this class of books, I have, first, observed the *subjects* upon which Masons lecture. These are easily seen, and no one can fail to see that they are of a moral and religious character. I then noticed the points especially insisted upon; because they have evidently been made prominent, in order to arrest the attention of Masons for their instruction; and lastly, I observed the places where the writers have given *opinions*, by which, often, more is intimated than is expressed. It is easy to see that such opinions have their *root* in a lodge. The result of this reading has been a general impression as to the objects of Masonry, to which I have no desire to add anything from personal observation of ceremonies practiced, or doctrines inculcated, within the walls of a building. We may see, very plainly, that the true lodge answers to Solomon's Temple, and that this is not a building "made with hands." We are told, also, in sufficiently plain language, the proper object of study to a Mason, in what is said of the Name of God and of Truth; and that one of the principal ends aimed at, is a sublime morality, by which all of the members of the fraternity are theoretically joined in a perfect brotherhood. No one can object to this purpose or proposed end; but, besides that I am averse to coming under artificial obligations, I would prefer, if possible, to realize a sense of unity

with the race, rather than restrict my regards to a separate circle. Benevolence seems to lose something of its character, when it is administered through the forms of a benevolent mutual insurance society.

As to the particular "impressive ceremony" by which, as Dr. Mackey says, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is inculcated in the "Master's Degree," I have only this to say, that the tenet in question cannot be taught by any mere mimetic ceremony; and, as to the mode and manner of the ceremony, that cannot be important. It may be a seeming murder, and a no less seeming resurrection; or it may be *the violent death of some unhappy individual, whose body is affected to have been lost; much time being expended and many ceremonies used in a search after the body*, or some other assimilated ceremony.

The ceremony itself may vary in lodges of different degrees, as Dr. Oliver tells us the positions of the square and compasses vary in the different degrees (Symbol of Glory, p. 177).

This important ceremony is no doubt accurately described for some one of the degrees, most likely that of Master Mason, by Swedenborg, in paragraph 335 of his (Masonic?) work on Heaven and Hell; and, again, paragraphs 447 to 450 of the same work, are possibly illustrative of some higher degree. The curious reader may refer at his leisure to these latter paragraphs, but I will recite paragraph 335 entire, remarking that Swedenborg must have considered candidates for admission into a lodge as "infants," because, in re-

generation the life is supposed to begin anew, as that of a "little" child, the Spirit being renewed, or supposed to be so, in the act of initiation.

Par. 335. "Infants are instructed principally by representatives suited to their capacities, which in beauty and fullness of wisdom derived from an interior ground, exceed all belief. Thus intelligence, which derives its soul from good, is insinuated into them by degrees. From two representatives, which it was granted me to see, a conclusion may be formed with regard to the rest. The angelic teachers* first represented the LORD rising from the sepulchre, and at the same time the union of His Human with the Divine, and this they effected in a manner so wise as to exceed all human wisdom, but yet in an innocent infantile manner. They also presented the idea of a sepulchre, but not at the same time the idea of the LORD, except so remotely that it was scarcely perceived to be the LORD; because in the idea of a sepulchre there is something dismal or funereal, which was thus removed. Afterward they cautiously admitted into the sepulchre something atmospherical, which appeared like a thin watery principle, by which they represented spiritual life in baptism, and this again with a decent removal of everything unbecoming Afterward I saw them represent the LORD'S descent to those who were in

* These angelic teachers—who were they but perfected Masons, engaged in the act of initiating and instructing a neophyte?—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

prison, and His ascent with them into heaven, which was done with incomparable prudence and piety.* One trait was peculiarly infantile. They let down small cords very soft and tender, and almost invisible, by which they assisted the LORD in his ascent; whilst a holy fear possessed them, lest any part of the representation should border upon anything destitute of a spiritual celestial principle. Not to mention other representatives in use among them, by which, as by sports suited to the minds of infants, they are brought into the knowledge of truth and the affections of good."—*Heaven and Hell.*

Dr. Oliver, in referring to the Third Degree, in his Theocratic Philosophy of Free Masonry, page 328, calls it "a sublime degree, for (says he) it contains the essence of Purity and Light;" and then he adds—"*This Degree has a reference to the Christian dispensation, by which the day of salvation is more fully revealed; atonement is made for sin; and the Resurrection from the dead is plainly communicated and confirmed by the resurrection of* CHRIST *from the grave*"—as plainly, we may suppose, as was the crucifixion of CHRIST among the Galatians—ch. iii. 1.

Dr. Oliver here, without designing to disclose any secret of Masonry, tells us very plainly, nevertheless, *what* is done in a Masonic Lodge to teach the doctrine

* Sinners are said, in symbolic language, to be in prison.—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

of the resurrection; and Swedenborg tells us, substantially, *how* it is done: for, that both refer to a common ceremony, there cannot be a doubt.

It is not the fault of those who are "without," that the mystagogues do not agree among themselves about their own traditions. Dr. Ashe is another highly respected and authorized writer on Masonry, as sufficiently appears by the republication of his Masonic Manual by Dr. Oliver, and yet he thinks it necessary to make the following remark:—"*The ceremonies of Masons prove that the testimonials and insignia of the Master's order, in the present state of Masonry* [without doubt referring to the identical ceremony described by Swedenborg] *were devised within the ages of Christianity; and we are confident there are not any records in being, in any nation, or in any language, which can show them to be pertinent to any other system, or give them greater antiquity,*" p. 146.

Dr. Oliver cannot agree with this, and shows his large faith in the antiquity of the *Legend*, by the following note upon this passage, in which the extraordinary opinion of "Bro. Sir W. Drummond" is glanced at, and we are distinctly informed that Hutchinson, another great name in Masonry, treats the legend as an allegory!

"If Dr. Ashe refers in the above passage to the legend of the third degree, I think his conclusion is erroneous. I agree with the ingenious author that the present system of Free Masonry is essentially Christian;

and not the less so because it commences with the Jews: for Judaism, in all its references, was only a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. iii. 24). But I am persuaded that the original version of that legend was used in the very earliest times—even before the Flood—as a memorial of the resurrection, and *a type* of CHRIST. It was known both to the patriarchs, Jews, and idolaters; was referred to by JESUS CHRIST and his Apostles; and is allegorized in the parable of the moral death and restoration of the prodigal son, who, it is there said, "was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found." The idolaters exemplified the legend, and it was referred by them to the setting and rising of their chief deity, the sun; although some referred it to the sowing and sprouting of corn. I cannot enter more fully on this mysterious subject; but the fraternity will understand my meaning.* I may, however, add—as it forms the theme of an existing document from the pen of Bro. Sir W. Drummond, author of the Origines, which is to be seen in the archives of the Royal Arch Chapter at Edinburgh, No. 1—that this eminent person interprets our legend *astronomically*. And though I differ widely from the theory, I must confess that the arguments are very ingenious, and the coincidences extraordinary. *Hutchinson treats it as an allegory;* while I am persuaded

* Is there no contradiction in the position of a teacher of truth, who is under a solemn oath not to speak openly, that is, with frank candor?—*Note, by the author of C. the S.*

it is commemorative of an actual fact which occurred in the earliest age of the world." What is the worth of the individual *persuasion* of any one on a question like this?

Swedenborg died at London in 1772, less than one hundred years since; and now, in the middle of this nineteenth century, notwithstanding the art of printing and the boasted light of the time, we see that tradition has been at her usual work with his honored name, having thrown around it a number of the most *authentic* stories (for so they are considered by many), by which he is believed to have possessed supernatural powers; and a Church is growing up, founded confessedly upon "faith" in those powers, by which his doctrines and teachings are received as divine. Cannot this state of things instruct us as to the probabilities connected with the "Legends" of former ages, when printing was unknown, and science scarcely had a name? But I would have no one imagine that I am wanting in respect for the memory of the great Swedish philosopher. His writings are worthy of the profoundest study of every lover of the truth; but they should be read under the discipline of the closing paragraph of his work on Heaven and Hell. Swedenborg knew that he would be understood by the initiated, and his oath of secrecy forbid his explaining himself openly to the uninitiated.

It is useless to deny that Swedenborg was a Mason,

and that his oath of secrecy was one of the causes of his mystical mode of writing. What Swedenborg saw under the influence of his studies and contemplations, in and through Masonry in its higher degrees, he chose to write about as if seen in another world, his oath of secrecy forbidding him to write openly.

The Mystery of Masonry is the mystery of Swedenborg. The "Temple" referred to in paragraph 223, Heaven and Hell, is a Masonic Lodge; and the "preacher," there referred to, is either the presiding officer, who occupies the "seat of wisdom" (see the Preface to Dr. Mackey's Lexicon), or some Lecturer duly appointed by the Grand Master. I have seen it stated somewhere, that the position of the auditory, as described in this paragraph, is that of the members of the order of the *Knights of the Red Cross*, that of a circle during the lecture.

The Temple in the Spiritual world, as described by Swedenborg in his little work on the Earths in the Universe, is simply descriptive of a scene in nature, the design being no other than to carry the mind of the student to the conviction that nature, seen under what Swedenborg calls a "celestial idea," is spiritual and divine.

In some of Swedenborg's works (*Heaven and Hell* —*Divine Love and Divine Wisdom*), we read much of what he calls QUARTERS, *East, South, West, and North*, which has its explanation in a Masonic Lodge only. Man is supposed to commence his pilgrimage in the cold North, and, so, passes around to the sunny

South. Whatever Masons may think of this ceremony, it is but a miniature representation of the very same teaching that is embodied in the story of the children of Israel, passing from the land of darkness, Egypt, to the land of light—the Holy Land flowing with milk and honey; or, as among the heathens, to the feast of the gods, upon nectar and ambrosia—the poetical *Arcadia* of the ancients being itself no other than nature seen, as Swedenborg would say, under a celestial idea. Masons who desire to pass from the Exoteric to the Esoteric class, would do well to study the Swedish Mystic. Truth, says Dr. Mackey, is the proper study of a Mason. But Truth, in itself, has no adjective before it: it is not Masonic, and yet may be studied in a Lodge, as also in the writings of Masons, the student being careful never to lose sight of the true Lodge.

Masonic writers, Dr. Ashe and others, have much to say in defence of the secrecy imposed upon the members of the fraternity. I confess I have not been convinced of the propriety of it by anything I have read on the subject. They appeal to the secrecy of Diplomats, to the oath of secrecy taken by members of courts-martial, &c.; but the fact that no exceptions are ever taken to this sort of secrecy, shows that a distinction is seen by every one between the oath of a member of a court-martial and that of a Mason. We all understand the reason for the one. Masons, however, not only take an oath of secrecy, the reasons for which are unknown to the public, where treason

therefore may be suspected, but it is understood that they swear to secrecy before any secret is communicated to them. By this process they assume an obligation, the nature of which they do not know themselves until it is too late to withdraw. All that can then be done is to abstain from attendance upon the Lodge—the resort of the late Henry Clay, who wrote a letter in the latter period of his life, in which he said that for thirty years he had not been inside of a Lodge. John Quincy Adams published a letter recommending the abolition of the O. B. of a Mason, which was all that was necessary, in his opinion, to put an end to the system. The O. B. is simply the Oath of a Brother. When such men as John Quincy Adams are willing, after initiation, that Masonry should die, others who are not initiated must be excused for supposing that the day of usefulness for such an institution has passed, especially where the public voice can be heard in the government. Besides, those who are "without" may well find it difficult to understand the charity which incloses itself in a charmed circle, and contumeliously looks upon the non-elect as dogs and swine. If the latter class are unfortunate in their ignorance, is it altogether right to mystify them still further, by mysterious books purporting to come from another world? With all my respect for the memory of Swedenborg I feel uncomfortable toward him when I think of his reported visions into the spiritual world, which have already become one of the prominent delusions of the age. Would it not be better for every

man who has a thought, to speak it out openly, and then let the sun of truth shine upon it and determine its character? Masons recommend innocence, truth, candor, and brotherly love. These are very beautiful virtues, too beautiful to be cultivated exclusively in hot-houses, where they must lose some of their fragrance.

The student of Masonry will readily see, by the preceding extracts, that Masons themselves are apparently anxious to show a similitude of ceremony between the spurious and the genuine Free Masonry, the ancient and the modern Esoteric societies, and that in this they have evidently succeeded. *It is indisputable, that the important ceremony in the Master's Degree, however much it may vary in some of its details, must be similar to that in use formerly among the ancients, by which the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was taught. The only point of difference lies in the nature and character of the* LEGEND *at the root of the ceremony.* Dr. Oliver claims, in behalf of Masonry, a genuine Legend, a Legend founded upon truth, dating it in the earliest ages of the world, or, in another passage, referring to this subject, before the flood; whilst the story of the flood itself is called by Philo an allegory! Dr. Mackey seems to think that the Masonic Legend dates from the building of the Temple, while *Dr. Ashe sees in the testimonials and insignia of the Third Degree so strong a likeness to what is peculiar to Christianity*, as to be very positive in the opinion that "there are not any records in

being, in any nation, or in any language, which can show them to be pertinent to any other system, or give them greater antiquity."

It should be stated, as a matter of fairness, that Dr. Oliver attributes the ceremony among the ancients to an originally divine source, affirming that it was corrupted in the spurious societies, but preserved among the Essenes to the advent of CHRIST, which he regards as the fulfillment of prior types. But this assumption of a specially divine original is a mere after-thought, or mode of accounting for a ceremony among the spurious sects, the existence of which, but for such an explanation, would seem to furnish an original for the ceremony in the Master's Degree, without supposing a supernatural cause; for it is certain that the ancients did not copy from the moderns.

A certain ceremony, for the purpose of teaching a particular doctrine, is found to have been in existence among all ancient (spurious) Masonic societies, and is now made use of in Masonry, according to several accredited Masonic writers, for the purpose of teaching the same doctrine. *How can it be thought strange, that in the course of time this ceremony should have appeared in a written form, though in a mysterious record, whose actual history must be referred to the Essenes?* This ceremony has in fact actually been described, though in a mysterious manner also, almost under our very eyes, by Baron Swedenborg; for I cannot allow myself to doubt the connection of Swedenborg with the Masonic fraternity. As an additional proof of this, I would

appeal to the *Corollary* of Hutchinson, where, after reciting the principal heads of the Christian creed, including the scene of the resurrection, he expressly adds that, "In the Master's order this whole doctrine is symbolized, and the Christian conduct is by types presented to us."

The "unhappy event at the Temple," commemorated in the Master's Degree,—referring to the death of Hiram Abif,—is the type of a tragedy enacted at a later period; and the explanation of one would no doubt prove to be an explanation of the other, without either of them being historical, in a supernatural sense. When Swedenborg assures us that he had seen the LORD in person, giving us the very date, he means no more than that, on that particular date, his "interior" perception of the Truth had culminated in that opinion which was, to him, the corner-stone of his whole creed, that GOD is a MAN. He tells us that the LORD appeared to him while reading the Word; which precisely accords with the interpretation of the last chapter of Luke, in Sec. xiii. of this work. We must read Swedenborg's writings by the rule of correspondence—his own rule for reading the Scriptures themselves—which means that we must seek the spirit of the letter. This is a conceivable view, at all events; whereas, if it be supposed that a bodily person was intended by Swedenborg, then we would ask how he could know the person of the LORD from any other person, since no one of the Evangelists or Apostles has given us the remotest description of his person. Not a single trait of his per-

sonal appearance has been recorded, simply because, for the purposes of the gospel writers, the person was wholly absorbed in the personification.

I must remark that in all literature, there cannot be found a more deceptive expression than this, by Swedenborg, that, GOD is [a] man. Swedenborg did not mean to say that GOD is any particular man, this or that man, or any visible man whatever; but man in the unseen sense of Life, the universal life, in whom particular men are merely phenomenal, and without life in themselves. Man, in this sense, is neither old nor young, nor can anything be predicated of him which admits of an opposite or a correlative. This Life Swedenborg calls Man, because—as I venture to say—he is conceivable by man only, in virtue of the principle that the phenomenal man is a product of life in such way as that the product, as an effect, represents the cause, or is an ultimate, expressing its own first principle. It is only a mode of stating the ancient notion of man as a microcosm, or little world, in whom is centered all the virtues (or principles) of the great world. This microcosm Moses calls an "image" of GOD, and it is in virtue of the fact, that he is a true image, that he sees his own cause through himself in such a manner as to see only himself even in seeing GOD; and hence, Swedenborg calls GOD a man, though the article (a) should be omitted. It is not predicated of any particular man, but of the nature of man, and this is the reason why the true idea of GOD is the true idea of man also. Hence it is that this idea is the true rest of the soul.

So long as any man contemplates individual men he does not attain the idea expressed by Swedenborg, but, in the language of Scripture, in order to reach this idea, he must deny himself. It is a mystical process, in which the phenomenal man loses himself individually, and finds himself in the universal. It is said to be perfected in death, because the death of the body is the birth of the soul. This opinion was anciently connected with the notion, that *Body* is an accretion to the soul from what was called non-being, and, therefore, its presence to the soul made the soul "less by the addition." At death this addition from non-being was supposed to be separated from the soul, which thence, as they expressed it, became "greater," or, it returned to its original greatness, and saw itself as it was, or is, truly, and not phenomenally. Even in the body, it has been said that the soul sees nothing but by virtue of powers within itself assimilated to what it sees. This may possibly be thought to afford some explanation of the different expressions by which a certain vision is said to have the appearance as that of a man, as in Ezekiel. In other places, it is said to be *like* the SON OF MAN, and in others *like* the SON OF GOD—which may be forms of expression indicating life.

That man sees nothing but his own nature is, or has been, an opinion of wider extent than is generally known. A German couplet reads:

> "Were not the eye itself a sun
> No sun the eye could see."

The dogma of Swedenborg is a universal expression, embracing all particulars, that GOD is a man; and the Swede is perpetually telling us that the Angels, meaning perfected or regenerated men, always see GOD as a man.

But, on this subject, almost everywhere, and in all ages, men have written mystically, calling perfectly innocent men angels, &c. "I walked out, and met three angels, and they expressed themselves" thus and so.

There is in the world a distinct class of books, written "within and without," Ezek. ii. 10; or, "within and on the back side," Rev. v. 1; that is, they are symbolic books, having a double sense; and they have proceeded from the members of Esoteric societies in different ages of the world, who have written under the restraint of an oath of secrecy. What is the true key to these books? It is a state of the soul, and is not a transferable possession. "In thy light shall we see light," Psalm xxxvi. 9.

It is but just and proper to say, that Dr. Oliver is a Christian divine; and that, in many places, in his various works, he insists strongly upon there being a perfect harmony between Masonry and Christianity. In some places, he says, that Masonry is Christianity; in others, he asserts, the harmony of the two: in one passage, he would seem to give Masonry the highest place of the two, where he says: "It is true that Masonry is not confined exclusively to Christianity, but em-

braces all that is great and good in every religion under the sun, because it confines its excitements to the practice of morality, whatever the system of faith may be; because it is an institution of charity or brotherly love, and is not, consequently, a system of faith, but of practice; but it does not embrace, or lend the most indirect sanction to, any religious institution which diverges in the smallest degree, from the systematic worship of one God, the Creator and Governor of the world."—*Antiquities of Free Masonry*, p. 157.

In another passage the Lecturer says, speaking of Divine Love, "that the T. G. A. O. T. U. himself taught it as it was never understood before; and by his instructions Masonry became a universal science."

Here the founder of Christianity is appealed to as having made Masonry a universal science, for these mysterious letters mean. the "Word" of St. John, *Symbol of Glory*, p. 86,

Certainly, nothing can exceed the devotion of Dr. Oliver to Masonry. One of the preceding passages would indicate his opinion that it is even something beyond Christianity. It possesses all that is good in Christianity, and the good of all other religions besides; and is, moreover, a system of "practice," and "not of faith;" as if Christianity were a system of faith only. In another place, Dr. Oliver—determined to assert the highest position possible for his favorite art—says, that "Masonry *originated* with God; (and) like that eternal Being, it existed before time was, and shall exist when time shall be no more."—*Antiq. of*

M., p. 93. The author of the fourth gospel has hardly said anything more of the Word, and possibly the two writers intended to set forth a common idea.

The real nature of the antiquity of Masonry is undoubtedly expressed by Hutchinson in his fourteenth Lecture: "Our antiquity," says he, "is in our principles, maxims, language, learning, and religion." A principle, rightly conceived, is conceived as eternal; and, therefore, to conceive anything in its principles is to conceive it as eternal. Religion itself, so conceived, is seen to be eternal, and this is the Word, as conceived from this point of view. In this sense, the Scriptures are eternal; that is, they express eternal principles. To perceive these principles and their harmony, is to perceive the true unity; and yet this is not anything that ever has been or ever can be expressed by an image, except, as the Masons say, that everything in the universe is a symbol of it. But this is understood only by Esoteric Masons, who are not merely initiated in the forms of Masonry, but baptized in the Spirit of it. The eternal "language" of Masonry can only be the universal language of nature expressed in smiles, tears, frowns, &c.

Dr. Oliver not only assumes, with Dr. Mackey, that the Sacred Scriptures are the records of Masonry, but he familiarly writes of MOSES as a *Mason;* as also of NOAH, ENOCH, and other remarkable worthies of Scripture history: they were all Masons, according to Dr. Oliver. He expressly calls David a Grand Master, and Solomon is also called a Grand Master: St. Paul is a

"Worthy Brother." Aaron's priestly robe represented the universe, the description by Josephus being recited at length; and, indeed, the description is sufficiently remarkable, and may serve as an apology for those who have seen in the system some astronomic allusions to the sun and the moon, and to the *twelve* signs of the zodiac; to the seven planets; to the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, &c., the whole being representative of Nature as formerly understood.

"In a Mason's Lodge (says Dr. Oliver) everything which the candidate sees before his eyes, possesses a symbolical meaning to recommend the practice of virtue in order to produce the glory of GOD, peace on earth, and good will towards men; a result which is acceptable to T. G. A. O. T. U., because it cannot fail to prove a source of happiness to his creatures, and lead to an abundant reward in the mansions of the blessed."—*Symbol of Glory*, p. 117.

Masons appear to use words, for purposes of instruction, composed of the initial letters of sentences; and these they feel at liberty to publish, as being known only to the initiated. A word of this kind was formerly used to signify NATURE, which was made by the initial letters of four Hebrew words expressing the supposed four elements of nature, fire, air, water, and earth, nature being the real Tabernacle, the real Temple, the real Masonic Lodge; which again is expressed by the letters T. G. A. O. T. U., which means simply *the great Architect of the universe;* the work being inseparable from its author; and a great effort is made

to show that these mysterious letters, T. G. A. O. T. U., mean the WORD, of St. John, which was with GOD, and was GOD, by whom all things were made. And this is LIFE, the Builder of a Temple not made with hands, and it is no less the carpenter's mysterious SON.

The letters H. A. B., undoubtedly mean Hiram Abif, who represents the principle of Beauty in the Masonic Trinity of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty; and it is H. A. B. that supplies, by the "unhappy event" at the Temple, the "Legend" for the Master's Degree; and this was but illustrated at a later period in the form of biography, originating among the ancient Masons under the name of the Essenes.

Among other instructions given to a candidate is one—*to part with his life rather than part with his honor*;—and this is printed in italics. But by the word *honor* here, we must understand something infinitely more profound than can be seen in a fashionable exposition of the meaning of the word. Now, the "unhappy event at the Temple," spoken of by Masonic Lecturers, teaches, among other things, this very doctrine. Everything seen in a Lodge is symbolic, says Dr. Oliver. What, then, is the symbolism of H. A. B. being put to death upon refusing to surrender his secret (the secret of masonry), but this, that a true Mason must yield his life, rather than violate his sense of DUTY? No doubt a Mason is under the heaviest obligations to keep his oath of secrecy inviolate. But this is itself a symbolism, which signifies

that he is to maintain his fidelity, that is, his "honor." Fidelity is the very secret of a true life, which must on no account be surrendered to any power in the universe: and this is the doctrine of the gospel: "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26), the meaning of which is precisely the great lesson of Masonry; to wit, that DUTY (fidelity and righteousness) is more important than parents and friends, yea, even than [the natural] life itself.

Dr. Oliver claims especially a connection of Masonry with St. John the Evangelist, to whom, it seems, Masonic Lodges are dedicated, *Antiq. of M.*, p. 165. The Doctor even refers to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians as "a truly Masonic address;" and I confess I have looked in vain in St. Paul's Epistles for a clear statement of what in Rom. x. 8, he calls the "faith" he preached, and which in other places he calls the MYSTERY that had been hid from the beginning of the world.

In view of all these allusions to the mysteries of Masonry, and especially to the mystery of the Master's Degree, the Third Degree, one is strongly tempted to think that St. Paul was himself a Mason, and that his being caught up into the Third Heaven, for he is evidently speaking of himself in his allusion to this, where he heard unspeakable words, *which it was not lawful for a man to utter*, is, after all, no more than a reference to an ancient Masonic mystery. If this is

not the explanation of this passage in St. Paul's life, then, how is it to be understood? To say that it is a miracle is not to explain it, but to put it beyond the possibility of being explained. In this last case, we are called upon to believe, often on the ground that we believe many things we do not understand; and so why not this? We are told that we believe that grass grows, but cannot explain the manner of it. But there is a wide difference in the cases. We see grass growing; but no one of us sees St. Paul in the Third Heaven!

That the "mystery" or "faith" preached by St. Paul was the "Word" of St. John, there is no doubt; and that the "lost Word," which the Masons claim to be in possession of, has reference to the same Word, there can be as little doubt. A word is mysteriously communicated in one of the degrees of Masonry; but it is a mistake to suppose that the stone, with the new name written upon it, can be externally transferred by any such means. No intelligent Mason believes in the possibility of this; if others do believe it they must naturally be classed with those whom Dr. Mackey calls "exoteric" Masons, who make no progress in Masonry (or the knowledge of nature), beyond the threshold, even with all the assistance which the ceremonies of initiation can give. This was well understood by Hutchinson, undoubtedly one of the best writers on Masonry, where, speaking of signs and tokens used in the mystery, he says:—"the light [truth?] which had possessed the soul, and which was the first principle,

was in no wise to be distinguished by such signs and tokens, or revealed, expressed, or communicated thereby."—*Spirit of Masonry*, p. 141.

Now, this "light" in Masonry is identical with the true light of Christianity; but cannot be seen to be so, when clouded in either case with forms, and ceremonies, and writings, unless these are seen to be the mere garments, the flesh, of the Spirit. This Light (in the soul) is represented, in a Lodge, according to Hutchinson, by an emblem which he calls an emblem of "prudence;" the characteristics of which, as he enumerates or defines them, can only apply to a purified conscience. He applies the emblem also to what he calls its religious import, to wit, *the Star which led the wise men to Bethlehem.—Spirit of Masonry, Lecture* V. What does this signify, but that the Star in the East is itself emblematic of a principle of truth in the soul which, faithfully followed, will lead it to the Son of the Virgin; and this, rightly understood, is no other than itself seen in its exaltation. Hutchinson refers to it in this language: "It has been pointed out to you, that the furnitures of the lodge are emblems excitive of morality and good government: prudence shines in the center; or if you would apply this object to more sacred principles, it represents the blazing star which conducted the wise men to Bethlehem, and proclaimed the presence of the Son of God."

This *star* in the Gospel is simply a symbol of the principle of Truth in the soul, which is followed by the wise, in simplicity, until it proclaims the *presence* of the

divine. It is said to have risen in the east, because the sun rises in the east, and is itself, as light, the symbol of truth. This *star* is only another reference to the *Angel* speaking in GOD'S name; and the *Prophet*, rising in the midst of his brethren like unto Moses: and it is the *treasure* hid in a field; and the *grain* of mustard seed, &c. In the older story, it appears as a fire by night, and a column of smoke by day, guiding the Children of Israel from the Land of Darkness to the Land of Light.

Let no one imagine that this view detracts from either the truth, the sublimity, or the importance of the Scripture representations.

It is to their very mystery and majesty that we owe the form of the relations, which, if they could be historical, would be profane. Roman history shall grow old, and Grecian history shall grow old, and all other profane history shall grow old and be forgotten, but the Bible histories, which express principles, and not dead facts, shall never grow old.

Dr. Oliver's labors to demonstrate the connection of Masonry and Christianity (in his *Antiq. of M.*) brought upon him some censures from the brethren, as appears by his subsequent works, the *Star in the East*, and *The Insignia of the Royal Arch;* in both of which he defends his position against his censurers, though he writes under great disadvantages, because he cannot write openly. But it is plain, that Dr. Oliver considers the secret of Masonry to be the Corner Stone in Zion; the Word, of St. John, without

whom was not anything made that was made; "even T. G. A. O. T. U."—*Insignia, second letter*, p. 3.

The point in this discussion seems to be, that Masonry has two sides to it, speculative and operative, the latter only having a date, though a disputed one, Dr. Mackey referring it to the building of the Temple. Speculative Masonry is claimed to be coeval with the universe, or, as Dr. Oliver expresses it—it *originated* with GOD. In like manner, Christianity has a spiritual and a historical side; the first being the WORD, which was with GOD in the beginning, and was GOD; the latter being referred to the days of Tiberius. Now, the secret of Masonry, on its speculative side, must be also the secret of Christianity on its spiritual side, whatever this secret be, on the simple consideration that there can be but one T. G. A. O. T. U., and this, I say, can no more be *infused* into any one by a ceremony in Masonry, than by a ceremony in the Church; and yet in either case appropriate ceremonies may be instrumentally useful.

That Dr. Oliver is a learned man there is no doubt; but he is hopelessly involved in the externals of his art, the meaning of which he does not see so clearly as Dr. Mackey, who modestly professes to depend upon him for much information. He evidently sees Masonry in the "flesh," and attaches undue importance to its signs and symbols—as if these could be of any worth in themselves!

A true Mason is simply a true man, whose Lodge

is universal nature, where everything seen is symbolic of something unseen. Whatever is symbolic in the institution called a Lodge, is so, only as being an imitation of the true Lodge, and this is a building not made with hands, the construction of which, as Dr. Mackey says of Masonry, is truly Esoteric.

As I am not a Mason, no member of the fraternity need take offense at the preceding remarks. They have been made in a spirit of inquiry, and not of opposition to a system which, it is evident, engages the affections of some of the best members of society. I only say, for myself, that I would rather forego the advantages of the institution, whatever they are, than acquire them by entering into an artificial obligation of secrecy, even though it should turn out that the secrecy extends only to matters about which, in the general intercourse of the world, there is no disposition to be communicative. So far as the secret is supposed to relate to the mystery of life, we may all know, without a ceremony of initiation, that this cannot be taught by any ceremony whatever, and there is no danger of its ever being improperly communicated. So far as the instructions and teachings within a lodge may tend to the preservation of the moral decencies and proprieties of life, certainly no one can object to them; and that something of this kind is included in the instructions, we may very well suppose, by the repeated allusions to emblems of innocence and purity to be met with, even in the published lectures, the design of which, on the whole, can be no other than what is in-

cluded in the open teachings of the Church; Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

SECTION XXI.

THE following section is transferred, in part, to this work from the volume entitled—Swedenborg a Hermetic Philosopher, the subject of it having an immediate relation to the contents of this work.

The multitude of interpretations that different portions of the Sacred Writings have met with might discourage us, if we could not draw from this very variety a reconciling consideration; for what does it prove but the "many-sidedness" of those Scriptures, and their adaptation to the wants of every condition of life; while, at the same time, we may be sure that it is not essential for us to rest upon any one interpretation exclusively; but, if we will have explanations, or whatever they may be called, we are at full liberty to cull them from all quarters upon one single condition, that we domesticate nothing in our hearts except under the law of conscience.

Those who feel the want of an interpretation of Genesis, or of the Pentateuch as a whole, may undoubtedly seek for it wherever it may be found, and accept

such portions of different interpretations as may seem just and rational. Thus, many very beautiful interpretations may be found in Philo, though his criticisms are evidently a little cramped by a *theory* in great part manifestly drawn from Plato. Swedenborg also drew from Plato and others, and had a theory to which the Mosaic writings were compelled to submit in passing through his alembic.

It may be that every interpreter, at all advanced beyond the sensuous state, has some theory constantly present in reading mystic writings, or writings having an indeterminate element in them. The merely didactic mind will perhaps never see in the story of the Garden of Eden any thing but a veritable history; but the same story, under the examination of a genius a little exercised in poetry, appears as a mixture of history and allegory, while many see nothing in the story but the allegory, and consider it idle to imagine that it ever had a historical basis of any sort.

It is the same with nearly every part of the most ancient Scriptures; with, for example, the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon. With perhaps the majority of readers the Temple of Solomon, and also the Tabernacle, were mere buildings; very magnificent indeed, but still mere buildings for the worship of GOD. But some are struck with many portions of the account of their erection admitting a moral interpretation, and while the buildings are allowed to stand (or to have stood, once), for visible objects, these interpreters are delighted to meet with indications that Moses

and Solomon, in building the temples, were wise in the knowledge of GOD and of man; from which point it is not difficult to pass on to the moral meaning altogether, and affirm that the building, which was erected without "the noise of a hammer, or axe, or any tool of iron" (1 Kings vi. 7), was altogether a moral building, a building of GOD, not made with hands:—in short, many see in the story of Solomon's Temple a symbolical representation of MAN, as the temple of GOD, with its HOLY OF HOLIES deep seated in the centre of the human heart.

This class of readers or interpreters dismiss all idea of an external building, and study the details of the Temple (or of the Tabernacle) as significant of the nature of MAN, with its two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, used, perhaps, by every "image" of GOD in going to and fro in his daily avocations; and the Hermetic writers might possibly see their sulphur and mercury, as the attributes of their sacred Trinity, symbolized in the *Two Cherubim*, from "between" which GOD, as the SPIRIT, gave his commands to Moses for the Children of Israel; or, finally, it may come to this, that the Temple is Moses himself, whose conscience speaks forth the commands of GOD, to our consciences, where they are verified and acknowledged. Thou shalt not kill, said the conscience of Moses, seated in the "midst" of the Temple of the Lord, from "between" the *Soul* and the *Body*, as the two cherubim;—and where is the human heart that does not say, speaking from the same point, AMEN?

To understand the power and authority of this AMEN, we need only ask ourselves what authority Moses would have in the absence of it;—or, let us imagine that his commands had violated that oracle of GOD in the human breast! It is evident that the authority of Moses does not in the least depend upon the history of the miraculous accompaniments at the enunciation of the commandments; but, contrarily, the reasonableness of the commandments has supported a belief in the miracles.

From this mode of looking at the subject we may understand why Swedenborg regarded Moses as a Hermetic philosopher;—writing, as he says, in "correspondences," or, in other words, in Hermetic Symbolism; for this is the meaning of the Swedish philosopher, himself a Hermetic writer. Swedenborg tells us again and again that all the ancient wise men wrote in "*Correspondences*," undoubtedly including MOSES—for the interpretation of whose writings, or two books of them only, he devoted twelve octavo volumes! Now, this word, "correspondence," can itself have no other meaning than that of Symbolism. It is plain, therefore, that, in the estimation of Swedenborg, Moses was a Hermetic philosopher; and Swedenborg, having seized, as he supposed, his point of view, comes forward in modern times as his interpreter, yet without wholly laying off the veil himself. He has, in fact, rather taken up the mantle of Moses, and assumes to speak to us as if "the Lord had been seen of him"—to use his own language.

But does this lessen the authority of Moses? Not

in the least. On the contrary, it may show us the true ground of that authority, when we find it not only in Swedenborg, but in ourselves, and upon this foundation we may be enabled to predict the permanent authority of Moses, whose commandments will live and be respected forever;—and why?—because they proceeded from the human heart and speak to the human heart. We believe in Moses, because we believe in ourselves.

To enable the reader to understand these allusions more distinctly, let him study the real import of the following citations from Scripture:

Exodus xxv. 17.—And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: * two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

18. And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat.

19. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof.

20. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.

* Let us, for a moment, consider this *mercy-seat* to be a human heart, and the *gold* of which it is to be made is that of which we read in *Rev.* iii. 18—"tried in the fire"—said to make us "rich." With all reverence be it spoken, this is Alchemic gold.

21. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.

22. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Numbers vii. 89.—And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim: and he spake unto him.

viii. 1.—And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, &c.

1 *Kings* vi. 23.—And within the oracle he made two cherubim of olive tree, each ten cubits high.

24. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub; from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits.

25. And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubim were of one measure and one size.

26. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.

27. And he set the cherubim within the inner house; and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubim, so that the wing of one touched the one wall, and

the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.

2 *Kings* xix. 15.—And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest *between* the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

Psalm lxxx. 1.—Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock: thou that dwellest *between* the cherubim, shine forth.

Psalm xcix. 1.—The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubim: let the earth be moved.

Isaiah xxxvii. 16.—O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest *between* the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

Ezekiel x. 1.—Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim there appeared over them as it were a Sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

2. And he spake, &c. * * *

15. And the cherubim were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar. * * *

19. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight. * * *

20. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel, by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubim.

It cannot be thought strange that with such descriptions and allusions as these, a symbolic representation should be supposed, to the comparative disregard of the historical elements, though without denying them, and that some men may even yet be living who believe that the Lord—the eternal, the unchangeable—still speaks from "between" the cherubim to those who enter the temple, and penetrate the seat of mercy, their own hearts, unveiled. But further, and still more to this point:—

Exodus xxxiv. 33.—And till Moses had done speaking with them [the children of Israel], he put a veil on his face.

34. But when Moses went in before the Lord, to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.

35. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put a veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

St. Paul's commentary upon this *veil* is remarkable, and might very well excuse us for supposing it a purely

Hermetic veil, and that St. Paul himself thought no otherwise of it.

2 *Cor.* iii. 3.—Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministered to by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living GOD; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

4. And such trust have we through CHRIST to GODward.

5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of GOD.

6. Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

* * * * * *

12. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13. And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.

14. But their minds were blinded; for unto this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in CHRIST.

15. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

16. Nevertheless when it [the heart] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

17. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Philo's interpretation of the cherubim is inadmissible, or it needs a further interpretation; for he says that, "by one of the cherubim is understood the extreme outermost circumference of the entire heaven, in which the fixed stars celebrate their truly divine dance," &c.:—"the other (he says) is the inner sphere which is contained within that previously mentioned, which GOD originally divided into two parts:"—referring, no doubt, to the 6th verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis, or possibly to the 1st verse: "In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth." But Philo's description would seem to refer to an outer and inner sphere, as if one was contained in the other, in which case one would be larger than the other; whereas, we read that the cherubim were of "one measure and size."

Swedenborg's idea of mind and body would come nearer to the requisitions of the text; for, according to him, these may be regarded as the two extremes of the universe—of matter on the one side, and spirit on the other;—yet, so answering to each other as to be exactly united, as he says, by *correspondence;* and he further says, that there is nothing in the one which is not in the other; in the midst or "between" which we may suppose to be the *place* referred to in the text, which every man carries with him.

The *Hermetic* PHILALETHE had two certain impres-

sions upon his mind, which he refers to in the following language:

"When I consider the system or fabric of this world, I find it to be a certain series, a link or chain, which is extended *à non gradu ad non gradum*:— From that which is *beneath* all apprehension, to that which is *above* all apprehension. That which is beneath all degrees of sense is a certain horrible, inexpressible darkness; the magicians call it *tenebræ activæ*, and the effect of it in nature is cold, &c. For darkness is *vultus frigoris*, the complexion, body, and matrix of cold, as light is the *face, principle*, and *fountain* of *heat*. That which is above all degree of intelligence, is a certain *infinite inaccessible fire or light*. Dionysius calls it *caligo divina*, because it is *invisible* and *incomprehensible*. The Jew styles it EIN, that is *nihil* or *nothing*, but in a relative sense, or as the schoolmen express it, *quo ad nos*. [This nothing is simply no thing, or not a thing.] In plain terms, it is *deitas nuda sine indumento*. The middle substances, or chain between these two, is that which we commonly call nature. This is the *scala* of the great *Chaldee*, which doth reach *à tartaro ad primum ignem*, from the *subternatural darkness to the supernatural fire*."

This, to be sure, throws no light upon the subject, and I only recite it to show how men's minds have labored upon a certain two things, which Moses has shadowed out by two cherubim, equal to each other, whose outer wings touched the extreme outer walls, while their inner wings touched each other within the

house, from *between* which God communed with Moses, and gave him his commands for the people of Israel, to wit, the "congregation," who, according to some interpretations, are all of the passions and affections, and indeed all the capabilities of our nature, the whole of which are actually ruled by the Spirit of God, whether we know it or not. The wise are said to know it; but the unwise are ignorant of it, and think they possess and enjoy an independent life.

The Masonic Society is said to make great use of the story of the temple of Solomon, as symbolical and typical of a temple not made with hands; but I am not a Mason, and may be supposed not to know any thing on the subject; and yet Dr. OLIVER'S *Landmarks of Masonry*, an authorized Masonic work, very plainly shows how the subject is understood by the truly initiated within a lodge. Dr. Oliver gives a very minute account of a certain *rebuilding* of the temple, which any one may see has no reference whatever to a building of masonry and carpentry.

The second Temple, it appears, must be built upon the foundations of the first; which, interpreted, means that the man of grace must be created from the natural man.

"The foundations of the Temple (says Dr. Oliver) were opened and cleared from the accumulation of rubbish, that a level site might be procured for the commencement of the building. While engaged in excavations for this purpose, THREE fortunate sojourners [?] are said to have discovered our ancient stone of founda-

tion, which had been deposited in the secret crypt by Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty [Dr. O. has already told us that these represent the trinity], to prevent the communication of ineffable secrets to profane or unworthy persons. The discovery having been communicated to the prince, priest, and prophet of the Jews, the stone was adopted as the chief corner-stone of the re-edified building; and thus became, in a new and expressive sense, the type of a more excellent dispensation. An avenue was also accidentally discovered, supported by seven pair of pillars [?], perfect and entire, which, from their situation, had escaped the fury of the flames that had consumed the temple, and the desolation of war which had destroyed the city. The secret vault, which had been built by Solomon as a secure depository for certain valuable secrets that would inevitably have been lost without some such expedient for their preservation, communicated by a subterranean avenue with the King's Palace [?]; but, at the destruction of Jerusalem [?], the entrance having been closed by the rubbish of falling buildings, it had been now discovered by the appearance of a key-stone [?] amongst the foundations of the Sanctum Sanctorum," &c.

In reading this account of the rebuilding of the Temple, it is difficult not to think of the *three* sojourners in the "image" of the trinity;—of the seven virtues, as prudence, temperance, courage, fortitude, hope, faith, and charity, which in themselves are indestructible, however much they may be disregarded by man;—of the passage through these to the WISDOM crowning

life; and, finally, one may hope that the *key* is not so absolutely lost but that it may be found by the faithful, the simple, the true.

While one class of interpreters surrender the historical character of the first verses of Genesis, and another disregard the historical account of the building and rebuilding of the Temple, another class of interpreters think it no impiety to go so far as to deny that there ever was such a people as the Israelites, and affirm their belief that the whole history is symbolical and typical of the progress of man in the process of regeneration.

A peculiarly earnest and pious writer, Mr. THOMAS BROMLEY, evidently a man of great learning, published a very extraordinary volume in 1744, entitled—"*The Way to the Sabbath of Rest, or the Soul's Progress in the Work of the New Birth: together with the Journeys of the Children of Israel*," &c., in which the whole account of the Exodus is explained as symbolical and typical, the historical character being, not denied, indeed, but entirely disregarded:—and this account is given purely in the interest of piety. The wonders at Sinai, the waters of Horeb, the heavenly quails and manna, &c., &c., are all spiritualized, and may thus be said, in some sense, to be naturalized. The story itself is treated as a divine parable or allegory.

The *fire* in the *bush* is interpreted to be the Spirit of God in Moses—God, in Scripture, being often called a fire; the *waters* flow from the *stony* heart of man, softened by the Spirit of God; the *quails* and the

manna become heavenly truth, the divine food of the spiritually-awakened man.

The Alchemists, or some of them, symbolize this *truth* by *dew* from heaven; hence the erroneous opinion prevailing that the Alchemists thought that *dew* was the universal solvent! They thought that the Spirit of God was the universal solvent, and they tell us, in their jargon, to gather *dew* upon the *tops of mountains* by spreading *clean* linen cloths, &c., &c. Their writings fell into the hands of an unbelieving generation, and this age has inherited their misunderstandings.

The story of Robinson Crusoe has been believed true by those who could in nowise believe that *dew* is the universal solvent! Yet this class of readers have no difficulty in believing that quails and manna have been rained from heaven! But the actuality of the history of the transition from Egypt—as the Land of slavery and darkness—to the Holy Land flowing with milk and honey, the Land of Light and peace, is manifestly subordinate to the spiritual sense, and without a spiritual sense would be on a footing with other histories; whereas, the spiritual sense might remain in full beauty and power, without a historical basis, and thus free the story from seeming grounds for captious criticism.

This mode of interpretation has one important advantage, which many have seen, and which, in an inquiring age like this, ought by no means to be overlooked; and on this point the Swedenborgians have just reason to commend their system. It strikes a fatal blow at one

of the strongholds of the literal-reading infidel. This system of interpretation may be applied to many parts of Scripture—to the sacrifice of Isaac, for example.

The *literal*-reading infidel cries out against this story as a dishonor to GOD—as imputing to him a violation of one of the purest instincts of life, implanted by GOD himself in the breast of a loving father. The infidel dwells with exultation upon the horror of imagining that the infinite Father of all could command a loving parent to butcher his own son, and then burn his remains upon a funeral pyre, as an offering to himself.

To tell him that the event was in the control of GOD, and was not permitted to be consummated—that a substitute was provided—does not satisfy him. He insists that this explanation only changes a dishonorable tragedy into an equally disreputable farce, absolutely beneath and derogatory to the divine majesty.

If now this story be classed with other symbolic or allegoric illustrations of principle and eternal truth, what is the truth it poetically teaches? It is plainly this:—that there is but one object of supreme love for man, and no man is right-minded towards GOD, whose entire affections are centered upon any subordinate being. What now is stronger than the love of a father for a son—for an only son—for an only son in his old age? These conditions are all seized upon in this story, and the sacrifice of the son is poetically put for that of the *love* which, it was the object of the allegory to show, should be subordinate to the love of GOD. The literal reading may cheerfully be surrendered to the in-

fidel, but the eternal truth it teaches will preserve the story as a divine allegory in the admiration of all wise men.

Philo interprets at great length the story of the flood, of the *ark*, and of the preservation of the "just," as a piece of poetic symbolism. According to Philo, *man* is the *ark*, his sins are the overwhelming flood, from which is saved the principle of truth and good;—as true to-day as when the story was written.

It is plain that he did not consider the story as historical, or, if he did, it is certain that he attached no value to it as history.

All such stories are beautiful as allegories, but when their historic truth is not only insisted upon, but, as often happens, is made the chief interest, it is calculated to drive away from their study the more mature intellects, who often thus lose the benefit of ancient wisdom altogether.

As in the parables of the New Testament, so in the allegories of the Old, the truths taught have no need of historical reality for their support.

That which distinguishes the sacred writings from all other books, profane books so called, is not their historical verity, but it is the spiritual truth inclosed in the divine representations contained in the sacred volume. The historical character of the entire record, from Genesis to Revelation, may be surrendered without the loss of one "jot or tittle" of the eternal WORD, by which it was produced. When JESUS declared that "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words*

shall not pass away," he did not speak of written words; for, as respects what he said, his words were not then written; nor did he in a narrow, literal sense refer even to his spoken words, but he referred to that eternal truth in GOD, by whose authority and teaching he represented himself as speaking; for he said expressly, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me;" and in a great many forms he is represented as repeating this declaration, as if it was an important part of his mission to guard against being misunderstood on this point.

Those who are accustomed to dwell upon the literal reading of Scripture, are apt to fear that the truth itself is in danger when the literal sense is brought into question; but this is to mistake the effect for the cause, and imagine that the Bible is the cause of religion, instead of a product of it. Some, still further removed from the truth, if possible, are of opinion that the preservation of religion depends upon the building and endowment of churches, not seeing that the ancient temples and modern churches and mosques have all been produced by what is called the religious sentiment in man, which can never be destroyed but with the destruction of his nature. The external forms and ceremonies of religion may be perpetuated by synagogues, churches, and mosques, but the sentiment or the idea of religion, or whatever may be the name of the spiritual essence of religion, can never be lost, nor are churches essential to its preservation. Our Lord himself compared the Old Testament, or its forms and cere-

monies, to old bottles, by which we are taught to consider that all external appliances for the preservation of eternal truth are forever growing old, and are but the shell, the husks, the outside of religion. To respect these things is the duty of all good men in every country; but to insist upon them as the essentials of religion, is to rouse opposition in a certain class of middle intelligences, many of whom fancy it an evidence of high enlightenment to denounce religion as a dream, when they only mean to repudiate the show of religion; for even infidelity itself cannot destroy the core of religion in the human heart. To be certain of this, it is only necessary to know what it is.

I wish to make one suggestion, more especially for the consideration of those who may be offended with the view taken in this work, from a fancied want of reverence for the Bible; and it is this: that the Essenes, who, as I suppose, were the authors of the gospels, looked upon what we call the Old Testament as divine and sacred. It was so far from their purpose to bring these records into disrepute that, on the contrary, they called them, especially the Law, the Word of GOD and the SON OF GOD, although CHRIST more particularly speaks as the *Spirit* of the Word. Those who receive the gospels as divine, cannot look upon the Old Testament with more veneration than did the authors of the gospels themselves; for, although they compared its letter to water, they likened its

internal sense to life or Spirit. JESUS CHRIST is the personification of the Hebrew sacred books, regarded as divine and as the SON OF GOD; and much that he says must be interpreted from this point of view, as already shown, though he must be considered as speaking in the name of the Spirit of Truth also, especially in those chapters of John where CHRIST is so continuously the speaker.

To understand many of the sayings in those chapters, we must follow the transitions of the writer, who now speaks in the name of the Scriptures, and now as the Spirit of the Scriptures; the use of the mythical style of writing allowing in this respect the widest latitude, permitting the introduction also of local matters actually historical: and such a mode of writing naturally becomes a vehicle for expressing individual opinions, colored by the character of the times, wherein the very ignorance of the age is registered, the best commentators freely admitting that inspiration itself did not protect the writers from the consequences of their own ignorance, and did not teach them any one of the natural sciences. A record of actual facts in the order of nature, admits of an orderly and consecutive exposition, in which there shall appear no breaks or stops or transitions; but the gospels are not thus written, and will always present problems which the understanding, conversant with external nature merely, can never reduce into consecutive order. If the gospels could be explained in order as a series of historical facts, they would lose their character: they would be

on a footing with profane history, and their supreme intuitions of divine truth would be shorn of their beauty and universality, and would dwindle into mere dead facts of the past: the Spirit would become mere water.

The penalty of not understanding the Scriptures is ignorance, with whatever consequences may flow from ignorance; but we need not read or study any ancient writings under the opinion that our acceptance or rejection of them has eternal and definite results; for, as writings or books, they belong to things of time, and can have only temporal results. The gospels, I repeat, are Essene books, mystically expressing Essene opinions, for the most part of the Scriptures, and CHRIST is the personified expounder or representative of the Scriptures. Generally, but not constantly, he speaks as the personified Law, the Law being regarded more especially as the SON OF GOD.

This mode of interpretation sufficiently explains the mystical opening of the gospel (or Truth), according to St. John. The WORD is spoken of in its two senses, as written and unwritten. As unwritten it is eternal life, and both precedes and follows the written. The unwritten is said to have been "made flesh," this gospel giving no details of a supernatural birth, and no childhood to the Son of GOD. The "flesh" is the Letter of the Law, which is at once personified and treated historically with all the freedom of a myth, according to the Essene point of view as explained by Philo. The relation of the Letter to the Spirit is immediately

exhibited in the persons of the Baptist and Christ, as explained in the eleventh Section of the preceding work, and more fully in the Preface; after which the Evangelist proceeds with his mythical history, in illustration of the power and grace of the sacred Hebrew Scriptures personified, the first miracle being appropriately the marriage of the Spirit to the Church (or to the Letter, for it may be understood in either way), by which the WATER, or *letter*, is turned into *wine*, or SPIRIT, as this miracle is explained by Origen and other ancient Fathers of the Church.

As I have already said of John xiv. 6, where the language occurs; I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me,—this may express the precise opinion of an Essene Jew in regard to the Sacred books; for these were, in the estimation of this sect of the Jews, the Word of God, as if he had spoken audibly to them. It was the precise opinion of an Essene Jew, that no one could come to the Father, that is, to the knowledge of the Father, except by an exact fulfillment of the requirements of the Law. Hence the Hebrew Sacred books were appropriately called the "way" to the Father; and the Father is Life, as he is also the Truth. We may see in many places of Scripture, that obedience and a knowledge of the Father are connected together as cause and effect—"him thou hast sent," meaning the Scriptures, personified; called, by Matthew, in the person of John, the Messenger; the Law and the Spirit of the Law, being referred to interchangeably, as being

essentially one. Therefore, "to see" the Word was "to see the Father," the Father of the Word, as expressed in verse 7, verse 9 being a rebuke to those who were yet ignorant of the Father, after the Scriptures, revealing the Father, had been "so long a time" with them. In this sense, we may understand the 10th verse, that the Word is in the Father, and the Father in the Word—not as a person, but as the Spirit of Truth in the written word. Again, verse 15: If ye love me, keep my commandments: this admonition may be understood as if said by, or in the name of the Spirit of Truth; but it may be understood as said in the name of the letter also. In this latter case, we see the meaning of verse 16 very clearly; for the letter or written Law will bring to life, in its believer and follower, the true Spirit, called the Comforter, which shall "abide with him forever;" for, it was thought that one who had found the Truth would never leave it, or the Truth would never leave him; which, in modern phraseology, is expressed by saying, that one truly born in the Spirit, shall never fall from grace. Grace is the Spirit of Truth, the spiritual Christ; and Christ, as the written Word personified, promises to send this Spirit, as the Comforter or Spirit of Truth, to his followers, or to those who keep his written Word. This is only putting into language the operation of a principle, by which those who obey the Scriptures (that is, those who "do," as expressed elsewhere), shall receive the blessing which the Scriptures were designed to secure to the obedient.

The language, I am the true vine, chapter xv. (John), may be understood in the same manner. It is an Essene opinion, expressing his absolute faith in the Hebrew sacred Law, which is the VINE, of which the believers and followers are the branches; but the husbandman is the spirit; verse 4, setting forth the necessity of "abiding" in the Scriptures; for (verse 5), without abiding in the Word (living in the Word, obeying or "doing" the Word, that is, the commandments), a pious Jew could "do nothing." But this, and many similar sayings, must be understood of the Spirit also.

Verses 6, 7, 8, chapter xvii., seem to have express reference to the written Word, as it might now be said by many, in their reverence for the Bible, that it manifests "the name of God unto men;" that "they have known that all things whatsoever" that are in the Bible "are of God;" and that the Bible "gives to man the words it has received from God;" and "men have received them, and have known surely" that the Bible "came out from God," and they have believed that the Bible was "sent by God." But this is true of the Spirit also; and many of the sayings of Christ in John, as well as in the other gospels, must be understood of the Spirit, and not merely of the letter; for whatever is true as declared in the letter, is true in an infinitely higher sense of the Spirit from which the letter proceeded.

It cannot be imagined, therefore, that, in this mode of interpretation there is any want of reverence for the

Sacred Writings. No modern bibliolater approaches the Jewish Essene in his veneration for the Scriptures, although, it is true, the Essenes saw in them, both water and Spirit, flesh and blood; and in their sacred commentaries they personified these in Christ, who, as representing the Scriptures, is, first, the Son of the Father, and then becomes, in turn, the Father of the Son, as I have explained these mystical sayings,—similar language being used in reference to the Church, by calling the Church a mother, the mystical mother of a mystical Son. If the modern lover of the Bible will but conceive it to have life, and to give life to those who receive it as the gift of God, he cannot fail to see the Essene point of view; and then, to understand why the gospels are written in so mystical and mysterious a style, he has only to consider that the Essenes were a society or brotherhood, holding the doctrine of the Spirit, but solemnly sworn not to give it to the dogs and swine, as the common people were regarded.

The beauty of symbolic teaching is so great that any one might be excused for some enthusiasm, exposing him to dangers in its interpretation. Why not see in the pool of Bethesda, the symbol of a depressed soul, filled with "impotent" feelings in chaotic confusion? Such a soul becomes "moved" by an "angel" thought or good principle, blown to him by the wind "as it listeth," and then, whatever life-feeling first takes root in such a soul is renewed, strengthened, and prospered.

But for some such interpretation, what is the real value of the story?

The Hindoos have a beautiful sacred story of a Brahmin who *faithfully* performed the requirements of his religion, by bathing punctually in the Ganges until age gave intimations of approaching inability to attend to the external rite, when an angel visited him in a dream, and told him that Brahma had seen and approved of his fidelity, and had determined to reward him: that, henceforth he should find a sacred pool within his own dwelling, and should no longer be required to visit the Ganges. Nothing can be more evident, than that this story illustrates the genuine work of faith or fidelity; by the operation of which, the soul at length finds within itself the living water to which, in the Hindoo faith, the Ganges is as the water of Jacob's well.

It is hardly respectful to the penetration of the reader to interpret for him this very beautiful Indian story; but as I do not wish to be misunderstood, I must be excused for saying, that the Ganges is the Hindoo sacred river, and we may see in the story, that whoever sincerely and faithfully devotes himself to that which is esteemed holy, develops the principle of holiness in his own soul. Applied to the Bible, even this Hindoo story tells us plainly, that a faithful bathing of the soul in the spiritual teachings of the Bible will bring into consciousness the "living water" which originally inspired the Bible.

In the interpretation of symbolism, and I treat the

gospels as symbolic writings, we are perfectly at liberty, and, indeed, it may frequently be necessary, to make trial of a variety of tests, always drawing the test from nature; for, whatever is not in accordance with nature, either externally or internally, cannot be in accordance with anything that we can have any knowledge of: and with respect to the gospels, we should bring their teachings home to ourselves, or into the present time, for this is but acknowledging the universality of their teachings; but they would not be universal if they were simply historical. To do this effectually, we should first transport ourselves into the past, and endeavor to place ourselves in the position of the writers, and after discovering their point of view return to the present again—and gradually the truth will disclose itself. We have before us the same Bible, or sacred books, the gospel-writers had, and we have invisibly "among" us (in the language of the Baptist), the same Spirit of Truth which animated the writers of both the Old and the New Testaments.

If, after exhausting every trial in our power, something yet remains unexplained, then, the simple fact is, that there is something in the gospels we do not understand; something, the spirit of which we do not know. In such a case, I can see neither reason nor propriety in pretending to know or to understand it; and, least of all do I see how such a portion of the gospels, or of Scripture, can be applied to life. It need not, and should not on that account, be denied, but should be held in reserve for light, which may come

from a wider experience of life. It is an error to deny what we do not understand, similar in kind to that of affirming what we do not understand. We should do neither the one nor the other; but, when we *understand*, we are in a condition either to affirm or to deny, as the case may require; but we may often deny the literal sense, and yet modestly "wait" upon some other, leaving the principle of trust or faith its fullest freedom in harmony with reason. But in no case whatever should we crucify the Son of God in ourselves, for he will not forgive our transgressions, Exodus xxiii. 21.

It must be manifest to every one, that a large portion of the Bible teachings, referring to practical life, is perfectly open and free from mystery, furnishing materials for eloquent appeals from the pulpit, the value of which the author would be one of the last to deny; but over and above this, there are portions which, from a literal point of view, have for ages tortured the intellect of man, but which, from a mythical point of view, admit of interpretation in harmony with that stubborn and unyielding principle,—unyielding, because it is that in man which affirms the unyielding or immutable nature of God, even his unchangeable moral perfection; for we must not surrender the position by which, while we are obliged to say—There is no peace for the wicked—we are enabled to declare with certainty—Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,—not because we read these truths in a book, but we are sure of their truth

in the book, because they were first true in nature, the nature of GOD.

Before allowing this volume to pass irrecoverably from my control, I desire to say that it has not been written for the purpose of infusing doubts into the mind of any one with regard to religious verity—the most important subject that can occupy the attention of any human being. I would respect the faith of every one, no matter how literal: but because I know, and am absolutely certain, that there is now a large and increasing class of readers who are displeased with the literal sense of the Scriptures, and whose attention has perhaps never been called to any other, I not only feel excused for writing this work, but even venture to hope that it may be of some service. I believe, with Origen and many others of the Fathers of the Church, that "the Scriptures are of but little use to those who understand them as they are written." But I believe, also, that there is an underlying sense, the spirit of the Scriptures, the possession of which is of immeasurable importance. I would have no one imagine, therefore, that the sacred books are to be undervalued from anything I have written in this volume. I would say to every one; read and understand what St. Paul meant when he said that the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life; and, again, what CHRIST meant, who said the same thing in symbolism, comparing the letter to *flesh*. The same

teacher meant the very same thing when he said that the water of Jacob's well did not quench the thirst for truth, but that it was necessary to drink of the water that he, the SPIRIT, gave, which is said to be a never-failing fountain to those who find it. This is the teaching of CHRIST, and the writer of this volume has proposed no other. The warning to Nicodemus is a warning to every one of us; but if we read even this warning itself, and confine ourselves to the letter only, we are in danger of missing the Spirit, that is, the truth of it; for the rule of interpretation which St. Paul himself applied to the Old Testament we are called upon, by the word of Truth, to apply to the sacred volume as a whole; for to us, the whole is so much Letter, whose Spirit is CHRIST, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, which, being first in the seeker, shall lead its possessor into all truth, recalling the teachings of JESUS and verifying them by the "witness of the Spirit."

I cannot suppose that the opinions expressed in this volume will be acceptable to those who see Christianity only or chiefly through the mere denominational forms and ceremonies of modern times. I admit, however, that the SPIRIT OF CHRIST may be found in all or most of these denominations; yet not because of what may be sectarian in any of them; for, so far as a Church becomes merely sectarian, it must become narrow, and must tend to stifle, if not crucify, the SPIRIT. As I suppose, the forms should be seen in the Church, and not the Church in the forms. In the first case, the forms may be instrumentally good, just as the written Scrip-

tures are good, instrumentally; or, as St. Paul said: We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully (1 Tim. i. 8). But if the written takes absolute precedence in the affections, the Spirit cannot but suffer.

I have not written this work with any feeling of unkindness towards any system of religion, or towards any class of men. It was originally entered upon for the purpose of seeing the subject with all the clearness possible, in the full determination to "follow" the Spirit of Truth in any direction or to any result, according to my best apprehension of it. I publish the result as suggestions merely; for I know very well that the convictions of one ought never to be anything more than suggestions for another. I would gladly hope that those who differ from me may not allow that difference to disturb the charity with which all men are bound to regard the opinions of each other, knowing that, in this state, we all see as through a glass darkly.

THE END.

POSTSCRIPT.

The author has been questioned on some points which he thinks proper to answer by the following additional interpretations and remarks upon several passages of Scripture, in most of which he supposes the Law, personified, as speaking from the Essene point of view, as explained in the preceding work.

John viii. 12, &c.

Then spake (the Law) [personified, as written and unwritten, Letter and Spirit], saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. [This must be understood as expressing an Essene opinion of the divine character of the Hebrew sacred Law.]

V. 13. The Pharisees therefore said unto (him), Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

V. 14. [The Law] answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record [my writing] is true: for I [as the Spirit] know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye [who do not under-

stand me] cannot tell whence I came and whither I go.

V. 15. Ye judge after the flesh [after the Letter, for the flesh signifies the Letter]; I judge no man.

V. 16. And yet, if I judge, my judgment is true: for I [the Letter] am not alone, but I and the Father [the Spirit of Truth] that sent me.

V. 17. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.

V. 18. I am one [the Letter] that bear witness of myself, and the Father [the Spirit of Truth] that sent me beareth witness of me. [This is elsewhere called the witness of the Spirit.]

V. 19. Then said they unto [him], Where is thy Father? [as if one should ask, what is the Truth, or the Spirit of Truth?] [The Law] answered, Ye neither know me [ye neither understand me, the Letter] nor my Father [the Spirit of Truth]: if ye had known [or understood] me [the Letter], ye would have known [ye would have understood] my Father [the Spirit of Truth] also.

V. 20. These words spake [the Law] in the treasury, as [he] taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on [him], for his hour was not yet come.

V. 21. Then said [the Law] again unto them, I go my way, and ye [who judge after the flesh, the Letter only] shall seek me, and shall die in your sins [He is addressing those who, he says, judge after the flesh, the Letter, and by the Letter the Spirit cannot be discovered]: Whither I go [what I signify] ye cannot

come [that is, ye cannot understand, because ye look to the Letter only].

V. 22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go ye cannot come.

V. 23. And [the Law] said unto them, Ye are from beneath, [ye judge from the Letter, the flesh]; I am from above [that is, I was conceived and written in the Spirit of Truth]: ye are of this [the outer] world; I am not of this world [that is, I am not of the outer, or was not conceived in the spirit of the outer, but in that of the inner, or spiritual world].

V. 24. I said, therefore, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I [the Law] am he [divine], ye shall die in your sins.

V. 25. Then said they unto [him], Who art thou [that is, What does the Law mean or signify]? and [the Law] saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning [for the written Word speaks but one and the same language always. "If you ask it any question, it makes but one and the same answer," and can neither answer nor explain anything but what is written].

V. 26. I have many things to say and to judge you [that is, the Law is complicated, and speaks of many things]: but he [the Spirit of Truth] that sent me [that originally dictated me] is true, and I speak to the world [that is, you will read in me] those things which I have heard of him [or, which were written in me by the Spirit of Truth].

V. 27. They understood not that he spake to them

of the Father [the Father of the written Word being the Spirit in which the Word was written, that is, the Spirit of Truth; for this was the Spirit that "moved" the "holy men of old" to write what are called the Sacred Scriptures].

V. 28. Then said [the Law] unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of Man [that is, when you conceive the Law as divine], then shall you know that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself [which may be emphatically said of the written Word]; but as my Father hath taught [as the Spirit of Truth hath written me], I speak these things.

V. 29. And he that sent me [the Spirit of Truth] is with me: The Father hath not left me [the Letter] alone; for I do [that is, I say, and do spiritually in the soul] always those things that please him.

V. 30. As [he] spake these words, many believed in [the Law].

V. 31. Then said [the Law] to those Jews that believed on [him], If ye continue in my word [that is, if you obey the precepts you find written in the Law], then are ye my disciples indeed;

V. 32. And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.

V. * * * 36. If [the Law] therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

The style of writing is that of a spiritual interpreter of the Law to the *brethren* of the Essene order, sworn not to give the secret doctrine, the doctrine of

the Spirit, to "dogs" and "swine." The doctrine itself is that of the Spirit, as underlying the Letter which is called *flesh*, the flesh of Christ, and Christ is the name of the Spirit.

If we insist upon a reason for calling this Spirit by the name of Jesus Christ, it is sufficient to observe that St. Paul assures the Romans, chapter xv. 8, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and then admit that, in the attempt to execute his ministry, he lost his life. He was probably an Essene, appointed to a special office, in which, like Moses before him, he was "faithful," as we read in Hebrews iii. 2. For this fidelity his name was identified with that of the Spirit that animated him, and was thus used by all of the symbolic teachers of the doctrine of the Spirit.

A large part of the gospels may be understood by this method of interpretation. We have only to suppose that they were written in symbolism to conceal from the public a secret doctrine, and that the chief figure in the representations stands for the Law regarded as a living creature, having a body and a soul, or flesh and blood.

It is important to observe that *death*, in the Scriptures, except in some cases where the natural death is clearly referred to, is a symbolic word for sin. This will explain some very remarkable declarations; for example:

John viii. 51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying he shall never see death [that is, as the Law forbids sin, whoever obeys the Law shall never sin].

And again: John xi. 25. (The Law) said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

V. 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Let us remember that Adam died the day he sinned; not physically, but morally. Adam's death the day he sinned was a moral death; and it is from this sort of death that the Law works a resurrection in those who believe in it and "turn" to it. Whosoever keeps the Law shall not sin; and if he who has sinned believes in the Law, obedience being understood, yet shall he live; or, as expressed in Isaiah, he shall save his soul alive. Life, in the Scriptures, is not to be understood in contradistinction from death, but in antithesis to sin. Life is Truth; and death is falsehood. The true man lives, the false man is dead.

Truth is the object of the Law, and the Law is the "way" to the Truth; and as truth is also life, the Law says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. This is a mystical saying of an Essene teacher to his brethren, which the brethren understood, because verbal explanations could be made or intimated, and they knew why that mode of writing was adopted, to wit, to guard against disclosing the secret to the uninitiated, lest they should trample it under their feet, and

turn again and rend those who disclosed it (Matt. vii. 6).

The Hebrew Law was, to an Essene, the Word of God, and the Son of both God and man—of God, as having been dictated by the Spirit of Truth; and of man, as being a written record. It was through the Law, as the Essenes believed, that one, estranged from the truth (from the Father of the Law, from God), might return to the Father, as represented in the parable.

For physical diseases, we must apply to the physician: for moral diseases, the Essene saw the remedy in the Law. The modern Bibliolater, in the same spirit, for the cure of moral disorders goes to the Bible, the New Testament being added to the Old, because written in the same spirit. That Spirit is Christ, the Spirit of Truth, the same from everlasting to everlasting. And as a return to the Father through the Law is a reconciliation, the Law is called the *medium*, or the mediator between God and man.

In the interview (by night) with Nicodemus, John iii., Christ speaks throughout mystically of the Law. This was, to the Essenes, the only begotten Son.

V. 16. For God [the Spirit of Truth—Christ, the Spirit] so loved the world [man] that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in (him) [and believing in the Law includes obedience to it], should not perish [through sin], but have everlasting life [that is, "shall never see death;" that is, again, shall never sin, for sin is death].

V. 17. For God sent not (the Law) into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through (him) might be saved.

In this symbolic teaching, the Law is the Son: as written, it is the eternal Word or truth, which was "made *flesh*," but while seen in the flesh only, the kingdom of heaven is not seen, John iii. 3, and xv. 8; but it is necessary to be born in the spirit (of Truth), for, John iii. 20, every one that doeth evil hateth the light [the Law that had come into the world, v. 18]; neither cometh to the light [the Law], lest his deeds should be reproved.

V. 21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God [in the spirit of Truth].

In John v. 37, Christ says, And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

V. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

In another passage Christ tells his hearers that, in seeing him, they see the Father; John xiv. 9. This contradiction disappears the moment we consider the metaphorical character of the language, and to what it refers. The Law is written and seen; but the spirit of the Law is unwritten and invisible. Jesus personifies the Law, and thus is both seen and not seen.

It is the Law speaking in the 46th and 47th verses, chapter v: Had ye believed Moses, ye would have be-

lieved me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? For, Christ speaks as the personification of those writings, expressing, however, yet mystically, their spiritual sense according to the doctrine of the Essenes.

I do not know how a literalist explains verses 8 and 10 of John vii, in the first of which Jesus gives his "brethren" to understand that he will "not go up unto the feast," and yet in the second we read that he did go up "unto the feast" secretly. As an incident in a drama it is of but little importance, but as a verity in the life of the representative of Truth it seems difficult to understand.

In chapter vii we read the often-quoted passage—verse 17—If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. Then we read, in verse 19, Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law? Why go ye about to kill me? This means that Christ is the Law itself, and speaks in its name; hence he says, do what the Law requires, and you shall then, by the effect of obedience in and upon yourself, know that the Law originated in the Spirit of Truth, which is the Father of the Law; and then follows the question, Why do you go about to kill (the Spirit of the Law)? The answer is elsewhere given: It was because they did not understand either the Law or the Spirit of the Law. John viii. 19.

In some places Christ declares himself known, and then again unknown, either wholly or as to him that

sent him. In John vii. 28, we read, Ye both know me (he was speaking in the temple), and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true [the Spirit of Truth, in which the Letter was conceived and written], whom ye know not. And then, in verse 31, the people are represented as asking, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done? Which means, Can any man, coming in the name of the Scriptures, the Jews having their expectations upon a person, do more miracles than the spiritual miracles which the Law works in those who receive the Law into their hearts, and live in obedience to it? This is merely the reflection of a considerate Jew, who decides in his own mind that a person is not the subject of the Scriptures, but that it is the Spirit of Truth which becomes visible (metaphorically speaking) to those who "do" the will of the Father expressed in the Law, the Son of man.

John x. 40, represents that when the Spirit is denied, persecuted, "sought to be taken," it retires into the Letter—"into the place where John at first baptized, where it abides:" for the Baptist is the Letter. The Letter and Spirit are indeed one (John x. 30), but cannot be seen to be so, except when the Spirit becomes known. This knowledge is represented as a grace, because it is not a product of the will, except where the will itself is moved by the Spirit of Truth, which, in the end, shows itself to be the Father of the Son of man in the flesh, that is, in the Letter.

The process will be seen to be "circular." The key

to the New Testament is the Law in the Old Testament; and the key to the Law is the Spirit, the Christ of the New Testament.

To guard against being misunderstood, it is proper to repeat that a truth, which is so as declared and seen in the Letter, is true in a higher sense as seen in the Spirit; and, in fact, the unity of the Spirit and the Letter only becomes truly conceivable when a higher unity is conceived. It is only from a conception of the higher unity that the survey over the whole doctrine becomes peaceful and complacent, because from this view the true harmony becomes distinctly visible.

That the Gospel writers did not have their eye upon a regular succession of historical facts, in writing the histories, will become very apparent by referring to any one distinct statement, and observing how the writers in the several Gospels depart from the order of facts recorded as following it. For example: the Lord's Prayer occurs in Matthew, v. 9–13; in Luke it occurs, with a slight variation, in chapter xi., verses 2 to 4; but the teaching which follows, in the respective chapters, is entirely different from each other, and can only find parallels in dispersed portions of the Gospels—the teaching on the whole being the same, but not the order of it; which shows that the writers were bound, indeed, by a certain truth of doctrine, but not at all confined by a regard to historical verity. The saying (Matt. vi. 24), No man can serve two masters, which appears in Matthew as a part of the teaching following

the prayer, as if uttered in the same presence, is found in Luke xvi. 13, in the presence of another assemblage, very many events and teachings having intervened between this saying in Luke and the prayer in the eleventh chapter. The prayer itself is dispersed in both Mark and John, portions of it appearing in widely separated places, the prayer, as a whole, or as a unity, not being in either of these two Gospels.

In like manner, we see that the relation of the Baptist to Christ (the Letter to the Spirit), is taught differently by the different writers (compare Matt. xi. 11. with John i. 26, 27). The teaching is the same, but the reported facts, by which the doctrine is taught, are different,—in the one case, the teaching is put into the mouth of the Baptist; in the other, it is uttered by Christ himself; which shows that the writers were of one accord as to doctrine, but wrote independently of a historical basis.

The teaching, again, in Luke iv. 30, and John viii. 59, is the same, but the facts are different; in the one case it is represented that Jesus was led to the brow of a hill to be cast headlong; in the other, the people took up stones to cast at him: but in both cases the (Spirit of Truth) passes free through their *midst.* It may be said that the scenes are not the same, and that each is exactly true historically, as related. This will satisfy those who "judge after the flesh" (John viii. 15), that is, after the Letter; but those who recognize the doctrine intended to be taught will look upon that explanation as constrained, and as a mere effort to ac-

commodate the text to the demands of verbal criticism. From the point of view taken in this volume, the differences above recited, many others being purposely unnoticed, can give no uneasiness whatever. In point of fact, they strengthen the view of the author, for they serve to show that while the Gospel-writers wrote independently, in a great degree, of each other, and independently of outward history, they were all bound together by a common doctrine, the doctrine of the Spirit,—the secret doctrine of the Essene Society.

The harmony of the Gospels, in other words, is that of doctrine, and is not one of history; and the more clearly this point shall appear, the more certainly shall we see both the truth and the importance of the doctrine. That the doctrine is important, and that, too, in the highest degree, the author wishes to assert, and, if in his power, he would impress this upon the conscience of every individual in Christendom; and he earnestly hopes that no single passage, or even word, can be found in this volume calculated to convey any other impression. The Truth of God and the Truth of the Scriptures, when rightly understood, cannot be at variance.

Water is Matter -
Fire is the Vivifying Spirit
Fire is the Generating Principle
Man is the flesh must be born of Water.
Woman is Water - is the Moon - is the Earth
is the female - or passive principle in Nature
Fire is the Regenerator - the Active principle;
Man must be born both of Water & Fire.
Fire is Truth - Christ is Truth - the Word;
Christ comes to Baptise by both Water & Fire.
Water is the Letter - Man born of Woman alone
must die (Spiritually).
Man must be Regenerate by the Word - the Spirit
of Truth - the Logos -
Christ is the Regeneration - the Resurrection - the
Spirit - the Everlasting Truths - Crucified by the
Letter - but Indwelling - as Melchizedec -
Body & Soul are the Tabernacle & Adytum -
The Adytum is the "Abode" of the Spirit.
The Soul is Generating - Female - The Church -
The Soul - Water is Sacred to it - St John - the "Letter"
The Spirit is Neutral - & both Male & Female - hence
the Wonder of a dual principle (Genius & Soul)
a Reflection of both Water & Fire - The Third principle
may be called the "Result of Union" (Dual) or the
Mediator - or the Apparent -

A Trinity God head is seen in Abraham - Isaac
& high Priest Melchizedec - Man having discovered
his dual Nature Comprehensive of Intellect - Morals
& Passion -

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